

**VIETNAMESE CATHOLIC IMMIGRANTS IN AUSTRALIA AND  
FRANCE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THEIR CULTURAL  
AND LINGUISTIC ADAPTATION, 2000-2005.**

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**This thesis is submitted in fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Education,  
Faculty of Arts,  
The University of Adelaide, South Australia, July 2018**



*The Bronze Drum, the Dragon, Symbols of Vietnamese Culture with the Map of Vietnam*  
*Source: Internet free materials*

## MAP OF VIETNAM WITHIN THE REGION



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## **Abstract**

This thesis endeavoured to examine and compare the experiences of cultural adaptation, in the context of family, school and community, amongst people of Vietnamese background who were members of Catholic communities in Adelaide and Paris during the period 2000-2005.

The research methodology used in this study was a qualitative method based on the framework of the humanistic sociological research initiated first by Thomas and Znaniecki in America and Poland and later in Australia by Smolicz. The fundamental assumption of humanistic sociological method is that cultural and social phenomena can only be fully understood if they are studied from the participants' perspective rather than an outside observer's. The main data were collected from sixteen written memoirs, forty-one oral memoirs and 340 questionnaires from respondents of first and second generation Vietnamese in Australia, plus thirteen oral memoirs and 60 questionnaire responses from respondents in France. Almost all of these respondents were drawn from the Vietnamese Catholic communities in Adelaide and in Paris. Other sources of data included in-depth interviews with community leaders and educational authorities and the use of Vietnamese community publications such as magazines, newsletters, community reports and constitutions. These sets of data were interpreted in the light of the knowledge and understanding obtained through the researcher's participant observation in the life of the Vietnamese people in Vietnam, France and Australia over a period of more than thirty years. The data collected were analysed in the light of the humanistic sociological framework of group and personal cultural values. The conceptual framework and methods of research of this study were discussed in Chapters 3 & 4.

The cultural adaptation experiences of the respondents into the host society whether Australia or France were examined, with special focus on language maintenance and educational issues. Vietnamese language teaching programs across three education levels from primary to tertiary in the context of the language policies in Australia and France were examined in Chapter 5. The respondents' patterns of linguistic proficiency, activation and evaluation as well as their Vietnamese learning experiences were analysed in Chapters 6 & 7. The language maintenance and transmission data were examined in conjunction with the language theories of Fishman and Clyne.



The study also investigated the extent to which family life (Chapter 8) and community organisations, especially the religious organisations (Chapter 9) had contributed to the respondents' cultural adaptation and influenced the construction of their personal and collective cultural identity in Adelaide and Paris. Smolicz's theory of core values and cultural identity was used to interpret the data on family.

From a comparative perspective, the findings indicated that Australian social and educational policies, favouring cultural diversity and supporting the teaching of ethnic languages such as Vietnamese, had resulted in a higher level of language maintenance and transmission among second generation Vietnamese participants in Adelaide compared with those in Paris. However, clear signs of language shift and language loss among respondents of second generation were apparent in both communities. Participation in community and family life also proved to be one of the most effective ways for preserving language and culture traditions. The Vietnamese Catholic communities were found to be important social systems for the Vietnamese immigrants in Adelaide and Paris. These organisations had contributed significantly to their successful cultural integration and played a vital role in the construction of a strong Vietnamese collective identity in Australia, and to lesser degree in France. Vietnamese family and linguistic values were highly evaluated and identified as core values of the Vietnamese culture by both groups of respondents in Adelaide and Paris. In the absence of a multicultural policy in France, the Vietnamese community organisations in France were not supported financially by the government, and consequently they were found to be less effective in helping members in their cultural adaptation process, compared with those in Australia, which received a substantial amount of money in subsidies each year to support their activities.

Overall, many of the respondents in this study were able to maintain their linguistic and cultural values in the family and Vietnamese communities as a vibrant part of their cultural and social life in the new country, but at the same time many had achieved a high degree of successful integration into the way of life of the host society, in the areas of education and occupation. In addition to their theoretical significance, these findings have important policy implications for the Vietnamese community members, educational authorities and government agencies.

## **Declaration**

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used as in a submission in my name for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint award of this degree.

I give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the university's digital research repository, the Library Search and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

I acknowledge the support I have received for my research through the provision of an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

Signature:

Marie TRẦN THỊ NIÊN

## **Acknowledgements**

The completion of this study has been a very long journey for me and it would not be possible without the support and encouragement of so many people to whom I wish to express my deepest gratitude. Firstly, I wish to thank the late Professor J.J Smolicz who was my principal supervisor, for his inspiration, his guidance and his dedication to the promotion of multiculturalism in Australia. His contribution will always be remembered with great appreciation and affection. Secondly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr Margaret Secombe, the co-supervisor of this thesis for her willingness to take on the role of sole supervisor of this thesis when Professor Smolicz passed away. She was exceptional in the way she guided me through every step of the study. Her professional approach, her knowledge of both the topic and the methodology gave me great confidence. I am also grateful for her kindness, her understanding of my circumstances, and her generosity with the amount of time that she has devoted to helping me to complete this study.

I would like to thank the University staff from the Asian Studies Centre, the School of Education, many of whom were my colleagues and friends, and great supporters of this project. My special thanks to Professor Richard Russell, former Dean of Graduate Studies and his administrative assistant, Ms Pamela Cook, for their continuing support and understanding which has enabled me to submit this thesis.

I wish to acknowledge the support of my Congregation, the Sisters of Mercy, especially those who have proof read some of my first chapters. I also wish to acknowledge the support from the Catholic Church Office, through Chancellor Heather Carey, who has kindly given me the necessary time off work so that I can complete the thesis. I wish to offer my heartfelt thanks to the migrant chaplains, community leaders and all 400 participants in this study who have generously given their time for interviews and questionnaire completion.

Last but not least, I wish to thank my dear mother, Mrs Vu Thi Phung, and my two brothers, Tran Quang Tong and Tran Minh Hua and my niece, Tran Thien Kim for their loving support, especially Tong for his help in the transcript of the interview tapes and the provision of a number of pictures used in the study. I would like to dedicate this study to my dear mother, Mrs Vu Thi Phung, and Professor J.J. Smolicz.

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## List of Abbreviations

ABS:	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ACARA	Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority
ALLP:	Australian Language and Literacy Policy
APC:	American Population Census
CDCGVN Sydney-NSW:	Cộng Đồng Công Giáo Việt-Nam Sydney-NSW (Vietnamese Catholic Community Sydney-NSW)
CDCGNV/NU:	Cộng Đồng Công Giáo Việt-Nam tại Nam Úc (Vietnamese Catholic Community in South Australia)
CDNVTDLB/UC:	Cộng Đồng Người Việt Tự Do Liên Bang Úc Châu (Vietnamese Community in Australia - all States and Territories)
CPA:	Comprehensive Plan of Actions (Geneva Conference on Refugees June 1989)
DECS	Department of Education and Children's Services
DECD	Department of Education and Child Development
DEET:	Department of Employment, Education and Training
DETE	Department of Education, Training and Employment
DIMIA:	Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.
DRV:	Democratic Republic of Vietnam
EDSA:	Education Department of South Australia (Previously this was known as DECS and most recently DECD)
ESA:	Ethnic Schools' Association of South Australia Inc.
ESB:	Ethnic Schools' Board of South Australia
LCAO	Langues et Civilisations de l'Asie Orientale
L' INALCO	L'Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales
LMCVP:	La Mission Catholique Vietnamienne à Paris
LOTE	Languages Other than English
MCEETYA:	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
MECC:	Multicultural Education Co-ordinating Committee
ODP:	Orderly Departure Program
PEB:	Public Examination Board of South Australia

PES:	Publicly Examined Year 12 Subjects
RSVN:	Republic of South Việt Nam
SACE:	Secondary Assessment Certificate of Education
SAIL:	South Australian Institute of Languages
SAMEAC:	South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission
SASSL:	South Australian Secondary School of Languages
SASL:	South Australian School of Languages
SBS:	Special Broadcasting Service
SRV:	Socialist Republic of Vietnam
SSABSA:	Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia
UGVF:	Union Générale des Vietnamiens de France (Union General of Vietnamese in France)
UJVF:	Union des Jeunes Vietnamiens de France (Union of Young Vietnamese in France)
VCA:	Vietnamese Community in Australia
VCA/ACT:	Vietnamese Community in Australia/Australian Capital Territory Chapter
VCA/NSW:	Vietnamese Community in Australia/New South Wales Chapter
VCA/NT:	Vietnamese Community in Australia/Northern Territory Chapter
VCA/QLD:	Vietnamese Community in Australia/Queensland Chapter
VCA/SA:	Vietnamese Community in Australia/South Australia Chapter
VCA/VIC:	Vietnamese Community in Australia/Victoria Chapter
VCA/WA:	Vietnamese Community in Australia/Western Australia Chapter
VCA/W:	Vietnamese Community in Australia/Wollongong Chapter
VCCS NSW	Vietnamese Catholic Community, Sydney-NSW
VCCSA:	Vietnamese Catholic Community in South Australia
VIS:	Vietnam Information Services Pty Limited
VSIRC	Vietnamese Studies Internet Resource Centre

## A Glossary of Vietnamese Terms used in the Thesis

Áo dài	Tunic dress worn by Vietnamese women in ceremonial and formal occasions
Bánh Chung	New year cake made with sticky rice, yellow beans and pork wrapped in banana leaves in square shape
Bánh Tét	New year cake made with sticky rice, yellow beans and pork meat wrapped in banana leaves in cylinder shape
Chả giò	Spring rolls
Cộng Đồng Công Giáo Việt-Nam Nam Úc	Vietnamese Catholic Community in South Australia
Cộng Đồng Công Giáo Việt-Nam Sydney-NSW	Vietnamese Catholic Community Sydney-NSW
Cộng Đồng Người Việt Tự Do Liên Bang Úc Châu	Vietnamese Community in Australia - all States and Territories
Đền Thờ Tổ	Ancestors' Temple
Lễ giỗ	Anniversary of the deceased members of the family
Lính thợ	Vietnamese soldier workers recruited by the French colonial government during the Two World Wars
Nhân, Lễ, Nghĩa, Trí, Tín	Five cardinal virtues that every person should have according to Confucius teaching (Humanity, politeness, gratitude, knowledge, trust)
Phở	Vietnamese Noodle Soup
Tây Con	Little French man
Tết Nguyên Đán	Vietnamese New Year
Tết Trung Thu	Mid-Autumn Children's Festival
Việt Kiều	Term used to name Vietnamese people living overseas, those who left Vietnam after the Fall of Saigon in 1975
Tam Giáo	Three Great Religions in Vietnam namely Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism

## **SECTION I: INTRODUCTION, HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Since the fall of Saigon in 1975, substantial numbers of people of Vietnamese origin have been living in countries outside their homeland in North America, Europe and Asia. The years of internal struggle between the end of the Second World War (1945) and the fall of Saigon (1975) led to about two million people leaving their Vietnamese homes to make a new life for themselves and their families in other parts of the world. France and Australia were among those countries which accepted Vietnamese refugees, and subsequently, members of their families for permanent settlement. The focus of this qualitative research investigation based on the principles of humanistic sociology (Znaniecki, 1963; Smolicz, 1979; 1999) was on the experiences of several sets of respondents in each of these countries, mainly over the period 2000-2005. This study tried to explore how individual life experiences of learning Vietnamese and resettling in another country shaped the collective ways in which Vietnamese people viewed themselves, their modes of behaviour and the end states of existence which they believed were important.

This introductory chapter defines the aim and focus of the study. It explains the historical and political events which led to the formation of the Vietnamese communities in both countries; discusses the significance and limitations of the investigation, and outlines the structure of the thesis.

### ***Aims of the study***

This study aimed to examine and compare the adaptation experiences amongst people of Vietnamese ethnic origin from the Vietnamese Catholic Community in Adelaide and the Vietnamese Catholic Community in Paris. It sought to investigate in particular the extent of Vietnamese language and culture maintenance in the contexts of the Vietnamese family and Vietnamese ethnic organisations in both countries. This broad aim was interpreted to include a consideration of what constituted the core elements of the Vietnamese culture, based on the concept of core values (Smolicz 1979; 1981; 1998) and of how Vietnamese language maintenance affected the retention of cultural identity among Vietnamese immigrants, especially those of the second generation in Adelaide as compared to those in Paris.



In addition, the research aimed to include a comparative investigation of the social and educational policies adopted by the Australian and French governments in relation to immigrant groups and their children. Finding out the opportunities for teaching and learning Vietnamese in the Australian and French contexts was of special concern.

### ***Research questions for the study***

In order to achieve successful outcomes for the study aims, the following research questions were formulated to guide the investigation and set clearer parameters for the study.

1. To what extent was Vietnamese language being transmitted and maintained, among the participants from the Vietnamese Catholic community in Adelaide, as compared with those from the Vietnamese Catholic community in Paris?
2. What was the impact of family life and community organisations, especially the Catholic communities, on the participants' cultural adaptation patterns and their cultural identity?
3. Based on the concept of core cultural values (Smolicz 1979; 1981), what did the participants consider as the core Vietnamese cultural values and how did these core values influence the formation of the participants' cultural identity, at individual and collective levels?
4. To what extent did the social and educational policies adopted by the French and Australian governments in dealing with Vietnamese immigrants differ? How far did these differences influence the patterns of Vietnamese language and culture maintenance in the two communities?

These four research questions have deliberately been formulated as general open-ended questions related to the broad social frameworks of family and community, without the mention of more specific factors or variables, because the humanistic sociological approach does not assume in advance what these may be, but rather allows those that are important to the participants to become apparent through their responses.

## ***Focus of the study***

As mentioned above, the focus of this study was the Vietnamese Catholic community in Adelaide and that in Paris. The reasons for the researcher choosing to concentrate on these two Vietnamese Catholic communities are presented below.

Firstly, these communities were significant groups in terms of numbers and comparable in several dimensions. They were among the most active and well organised communities of Vietnamese people outside Vietnam. There were many interesting adaptation aspects manifested through their social, cultural and religious activities for a researcher to explore and yet no major study, either in France or in Australia, had been carried out exclusively on these communities.

Secondly, the researcher deliberately chose the Vietnamese Community in Paris for this study because of the historical and cultural connections between Vietnam and France. Vietnam had been a French colony for a hundred years until 1954. Christianity was introduced and developed in Vietnam, mostly by French missionaries. In fact, the present alphabetical writing system of Vietnamese called "*Chữ Quốc Ngữ: The National Language*" was invented by several European missionaries (Portuguese, Italian and French) at the beginning of the seventeenth century (Dương Quảng Hàm, 1968: 190-6). Among these missionaries, Alexandre de Rhodes, a French Jesuit who was in Vietnam from 1591 to 1660, contributed the most to the establishment of the Vietnamese language (refer to Chapter 6 for more details).

Thirdly, there was the involvement of the researcher and her personal interest in, and knowledge of, both of these communities over the years. In relation to the Vietnamese Catholic community in South Australia, the researcher had served this community as one of its pastoral leaders for more than thirty years. She helped to establish this community with the first group of about twenty-five Vietnamese Catholic refugees who arrived in South Australia in 1975, and has continued to help this community ever since. This made the task of collecting and accessing relevant community documents needed for this research much easier. With regard to the Catholic Community in Paris, although the researcher was not directly involved in its pastoral administration in any formal capacity, she knew the unfolding history of this community, having participated in its activities for six years during

her time as a student in France (1968-1974). Over the course of this study, the researcher made three field trips to France; each time she spent from one to two months in the community, participating in its religious, educational and social activities regularly in order to interview the participants, to meet with the priests and community leaders and to observe them in action. The direct participation and long term involvement of the researcher in these communities gave her a better understanding of their direction, organisational structure and modes of operation. More importantly, through her participation as an insider, she had important insights from her own experience, into the cultural adaptation of the participants who came from the same community environment.

### ***Historical Background of Vietnamese Communities***

At this point, it is appropriate to explain the historical background to the formation of the two communities which were investigated in this study. The historical connection between Vietnam and Australia began in August 1920 with a tragic event when the steamer, Roberto Figueras, on its way to Noumea taking Vietnamese indentured workers, off-loaded thirty-two sick passengers at the Cape Pallarenda Quarantine Station outside Townsville. Thirteen of the Vietnamese died and were buried in graves in a small cemetery at the end of Townsville's airport runway. This connection became much stronger during the late 1950s with the involvement of Australia in the Vietnam War and its intake of Vietnamese refugees after the war from the late 1970s. The relationship between Vietnam and France goes back to the arrival of the French Jesuits to work as Christian missionaries in the late sixteenth century.

The anti-Catholic policy in Vietnam gave the French a reason to intervene in the country to protect their Christian missionaries. In August 1858 the French army landed in the port of Tourane (now called Danang). The French Government wanted to develop its political and religious influence in Indochina. It demanded the Imperial Court to allow its plan to establish a French Consulate and Commercial Attaché in Danang, but its request was rejected by the Imperial Court in Huế. The French responded by occupying Danang. This marked the beginning of the French colonial occupation in Vietnam which lasted almost a hundred years by 1954. Karnow (1984) suggested that the Vietnamese emperors at the time, namely Thiệu Trị and Tự Đức, were too weak to deal effectively with the French military intervention or diplomatically. They were more concerned with their Confucian doctrine and

neglected the country. The Imperial Court adopted a policy of isolation which did not allow any connection with the outside world, or any contact with foreigners. Consequently, most of the court mandarins were not aware of the development of the outside world.

The French invaded Saigon (now named Hồ Chí Minh City) in 1861 and in 1862 emperor Tự Đức had to surrender to the French the three southern provinces near Saigon. Six years later, in 1867, the entire southern part of the country became annexed to the French colony. The French also extended their control to the North. French forces seized Hà Nội and the Red River delta in 1882. Vietnam lost its independence in 1883. The Centre of Vietnam, renamed Annam, and Tonkin became French protectorates. Each of the three regions was governed differently by the French colonial administration (Karnow, 1984).

Throughout the period of French colonial rule, the nationalist movement grew. There was constant resistance led by intellectuals, writers, and other patriots but every resistance was crushed by the brutal force of the French colonial power. The two important nationalist leaders with different strategies were Phan Bội Châu and Phan Chu Trinh. Phan Bội Châu was a distinguished scholar and a radical monarchist who believed in the notion of a royal resistance movement, so he chose Prince Cường Để as leader of his movement and brought him to Japan to meet with Japanese political figures and exiled Chinese nationalists seeking support for his Eastward Movement established in 1907. Phan Bội Châu, like all nationalists in Asia at the time, was greatly inspired by the dramatic event, the Japanese defeated Russia in 1905, the first time an Asian nation had defeated a European power. In contrast to Phan Bội Châu, Phan Chu Trinh did not want to rely on Japan, and he also rejected even a liberal monarchy led movement. He was a moderate who wanted to work with the French administration to present his view of how to improve the country. He began his own progressive programs to modernize the country. He opened a school in Hà Nội where students, both female and male, could study modern science and economics as well as Asian Classics. They were taught in three languages namely, Vietnamese, Chinese and French. But Phan Chu Trinh was not supported by the Vietnamese extremists and the French authorities considered him as a threat to the colony, so they closed his school in 1908. He was arrested, first condemning to death then later to life imprisonment on the island of Pulo Condor. Thanks to his supporters' protest in France, he was released after three years and was allowed to move to Paris to live. He returned to Vietnam eventually and died in Saigon

in 1926, the year following Phan Bội Châu's arrest (Karnow, 1984). Neither of these two movements succeeded but they became a great source of inspiration for leaders of the new nationalist resistance groups in the 20th century who believed in the ideology of modernization and democracy for a united independent Vietnam. Nguyễn Ái Quốc, better known as Hồ Chí Minh, worked closely with Phan Chu Trinh on an anti-colonial petition to put forward at the Versailles Conference in 1919. In 1930 Nguyễn Ái Quốc successfully rallied several communist groups to form the Indochinese Communist Party, the most significant revolutionary party emerged out of this period (Karnow, 1984).

During the second world war, Vietnam was controlled by the Japanese because of the agreement between the French Government and the Japanese which accepted Japanese occupation of Indochina but as compensation the French continued administering Vietnam with a puppet French government. In the 1930's there were some small scale insurrections organised by nationalist groups against the French but they were all crushed by the French. In 1941 the Việt Nam Độc Lập Đồng Minh or in short as Việt-Minh (League for the Independence of Vietnam) was formed by Hồ Chí Minh. This movement was the main force in the liberation of Vietnam from its colonial invaders. Following the liberation of Vietnam from the Japanese in 1945, the Việt-Minh also played a vital role in the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) which Hồ Chí Minh wanted to incorporate the entire territory of Vietnam (Chesneaux, 1966; Nitz, 1984).

Following Japan's sudden surrender on August 13, 1945, the British assumed control in the south and helped to re-group the French troops who were captured by the Japanese. The French then started its colonial reconquest in the South from September 1945, and in the North from December 1946, totally ignoring the fact that in March 1946, France had officially recognised Hồ Chí Minh as president of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). In 1949 the French asked the former emperor Bảo Đại to establish a national anti-communist government in the south. Bảo Đại had always wanted independence and national unity for Vietnam, he had to change his position and agreed to set up a puppet administration under the French (Irving, 1975).

The disastrous defeat of the French forces at Điện Biên Phủ battle in 1954 marked the end of the French Indochina conflict, ending nearly a century of French colonial control in Vietnam.

During the French colonial period people had suffered from social and economic deprivation, high taxes and land alienation. They were forced to work in rubber plantations for the colony. The colonial administration spent most of its budget on security related matters, and only around a quarter on programs such as education and agriculture. This led to disastrous effects on the lives of the people and their educational levels. Before the colonisation literacy had been estimated at 80%, but it decreased considerably to around 20% by 1954 (Chesneaux, 1966; Duiker, 1983).

The country of Vietnam was divided into two parts at the 17th parallel by the Geneva Agreement in May-June 1954, the North became the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) under the Lao Động party and the South became the Republic of South Vietnam (RSVN) (Buttinger, 1967). According to Irving (1975) a million people left the North for the South after this agreement, and about 80,000 left the South for the North. A high majority of those who went to the South were Catholics who did not want to live under a communist system (Viviani, 1984). In April 1956 the last French troops left Vietnam.

Between 1954 and 1974 the two Republics of Vietnam had no diplomatic, cultural, or commercial connections with each other. There were constant conflicts and wars between the two parts of the country. Almost immediately after the Geneva Agreement, North Vietnam intensified its attacks in the South. The Republic of South Vietnam was supported by the United States and its western allies, including Australia in their fight against the invisible Việt Cộng alongside the soldiers of the Republic of South Vietnam. In December 1960 the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (NLF) was established in the South which began its intense campaign against the South Vietnam regime, under the banner of national liberation. The war went on for several years with both regimes claiming a mandate to control the entire territory of Vietnam. The South Vietnamese forces, with massive military backing, could not make advances against the invisible Việt Cộng infiltrated in the villages and remote provinces of South Vietnam. From 1969 to 1972 saw progressive withdrawal of American troops, with the final troop withdrawal in 1973, the South Vietnamese forces took over the responsibility for the war. With decreasing military and financial support from the United States plus intensive victorious attacks from the Việt Cộng, the South Vietnam Government had to surrender, and Saigon was captured by the North Vietnam Communists on 30 April 1975 (Duiker, 1983).

The communists took over the whole country and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) was declared in 1976. For fear of reprisals by the Communist government, great numbers of Vietnamese fled their country. In the ensuing decade, an estimated two million people fled Việt Nam, initially by sea, seeking refuge in neighbouring refugee camps in South East Asia and eventual resettlement in the West, predominantly in the United States, France, Canada and Australia.

### **The Vietnamese in Australia**

Prior to 1975, there were about 1000 Vietnam-born people in Australia, mostly tertiary students, orphans, and wives of Australian military personnel who had served in Viet Nam (Viviani, 1984). The most intense period of Vietnamese refugee resettlement in Australia occurred during 1975-1985. It was reported that by 1981, 49 616 Vietnamese refugees had been resettled in Australia (Viviani, 1984).

Viviani (1996) reported four main waves of Vietnamese migration to Australia during the period 1975-1995. These four waves corresponded to events in Vietnam and those happening in the international community. These events were not only the specific triggers for departures from Vietnam but also influenced resettlement policies in the receiving countries, such as Australia or France. The first wave consisted of those refugees who left Vietnam at the fall of Saigon in 1975 and others who left soon after. These were mainly well educated ethnic Vietnamese who had political or military connections with the former RSVN government. Among these first wave refugees, there were a high number of Catholics who feared religious repression and some ethnic Chinese who feared the takeover of their businesses (Viviani, 1996: 102-103). The second wave, arriving from 1976 to 1978, was a mixed group of those caught in refugee camps from the first wave and those who refused to accept the political and economic restrictions in Vietnam as the new communist regime struggled to gain control over South Vietnam. This group again consisted mainly of ethnic Vietnamese (Viviani, 1996: 103). The third wave was made up mainly of ethnic Chinese who arrived in Australia between 1978 and 1979, as a result of the move by the communist government officials to expel ethnic Chinese from Vietnam. This ethnic Chinese group settled in Australia in different ways from the first two waves. Although unskilled by

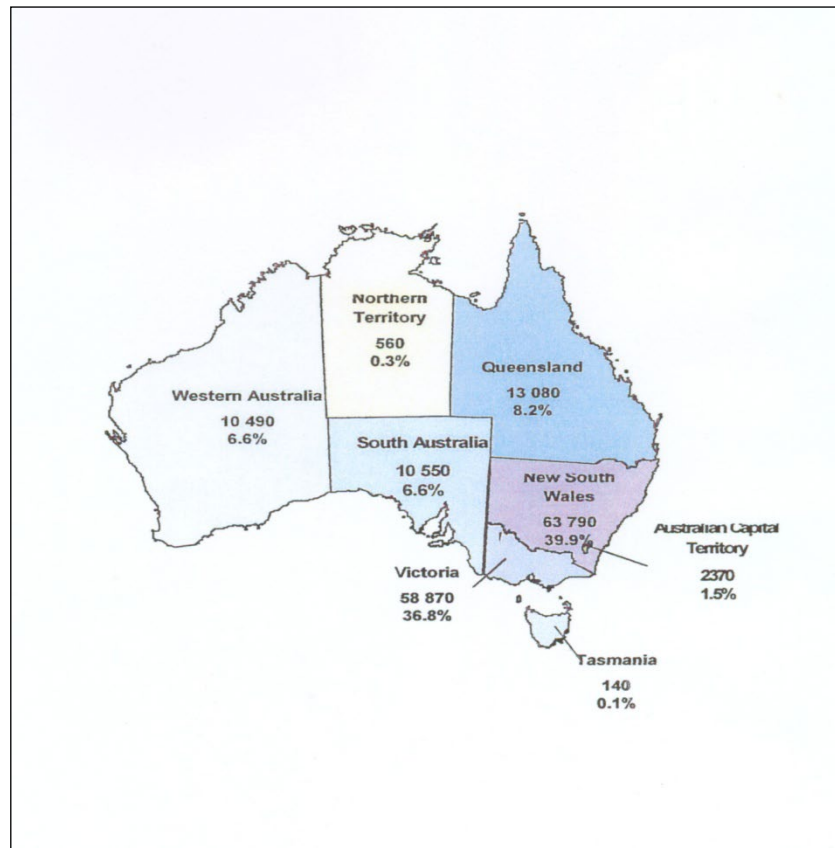


Australian standards, they successfully formed the many trading centres which are now such an obvious feature of the community around Australia.

After the third wave, Vietnam forcibly constrained departures and Australia, along with other resettlement countries, concentrated on clearing the backlog of people from camps and processing family reunions under the Orderly Departure Program (ODP) from Vietnam, an International agreement initiated by the Geneva Conference in 1979. The fourth wave consisted of two main groups: those who arrived in 1990 and 1991, under the Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA) agreement, after long periods waiting in camps in Indonesia and Hong Kong and those who came from Vietnam under the ODP program in the late 1980's and early 1990's. These fourth wave refugees were seen by some as economic refugees as many of these people could not meet the strict definition of a political refugee. These were principally working class or lower-middle class ethnic Vietnamese or ethnic Chinese seeking to leave Vietnam for a better life in a third country. Among them were small traders, rural and urban workers and many unemployed (Viviani 1996: 104).

The Vietnamese intake changed in the mid-1990s with the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan of Action and streamlining of the Vietnamese Family Migration Program. Thereafter, the number of refugees seeking asylum in Australia and those wanting to migrate to Australia declined considerably. By 1996 there were 151 054 Vietnam-born persons living in Australia (ABS, 1996). The majority resided in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia and they were of both Vietnamese and Chinese ancestry. The 2001 Census reported a total of 154 830 Vietnam-born persons in Australia, a slight increase of 3,776 (2.5%) persons compared with the 1996 Census. The 2006 Census recorded 159 850 Viet Nam-born persons in Australia, a further increase of 3.2 % from the 2001 Census. Among the total Vietnam-born population in Australia, 78.1% arrived prior to 1996. The 2006 distribution, by state and territory, showed that the residential concentration of the Vietnamese population had not changed since the previous Census. New South Wales had the largest number with 63 790, followed by Victoria (58 870), Queensland (13 080) and South Australia (10 550).

*Picture 1. 1 Geographic Distribution of Vietnam-Born Population in Australia 2006*



*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2006*

### **Composition of the Vietnamese Community in Australia**

It is difficult to define the exact number of people forming the Vietnamese community in Australia as among the 159 850 Vietnam-born persons (ABS, 2006), there were 41, 240 (24.6%) who identified themselves as having Chinese ancestry. The majority of these people would have links to the Chinese community rather than the Vietnamese community. In addition, there is no direct way of identifying in census statistics those who were born in Australia from Vietnamese immigrant parents. However, there are two other ways of determining the membership of the Vietnamese community based on the population census; one is through ancestry and the other is through the number of those who speak Vietnamese at home. The 2006 Census recorded 173 700 persons as having Vietnamese ancestry. This was equivalent to 0.9% of the total Australian population and ranked the Vietnamese 12th in the top 15 ancestry groups in Australia at the time.

The 2006 census also showed that the Vietnamese community was a significant linguistic community with 194 900 persons reported as speaking Vietnamese at home. This figure is larger than that of the Vietnamese ancestry figure because many of second generation Vietnamese who spoke Vietnamese at home would have been included in this figure. Speakers of Vietnamese made up 1% of the total Australian population and ranked Vietnamese 5th in the top 15 languages other than English commonly spoken at home in Australia. The comparison between the 1996 and 2006 census showed an increase of 33 % in the number of people using Vietnamese at home. See *Table 1.1* below.

*Table 1.1 Top 15 Languages Spoken at Home in Australia 1996 and 2006 Census*

1996			2006			Growth %
Language	N	% of Lotes *	Language	N	% of Lotes *	1996-2006
Italian	375,718	11.79	Chinese	500,466	15.91	45.83
Chinese	343,193	10.76	Italian	361,893	10.07	-15.66
Greek	269,770	8.46	Greek	252,222	8.02	-6.50
Arabic	177,598	5.57	Arabic	243,662	7.74	37.20
<b>Vietnamese</b>	<b>146,264</b>	<b>4.59</b>	<b>Vietnamese</b>	<b>194,858</b>	<b>6.19</b>	<b>33.22</b>
German	98,814	3.10	Spanish	97,998	3.11	7.38
Spanish	91,265	2.86	Tagalog	92,330	2.93	31.07
Macedonian	71,352	2.24	German	75,634	2.40	-23.46
Tagalog	70,441	2.21	Hindi	70,013	2.23	106.02
Croatian	69,173	2.17	Macedonian	67,831	2.16	-4.93
Polish	62,798	1.97	Croatian	63,615	2.02	-8.03
Turkish	46,204	1.45	ATSI	55,698	1.77	26.04
Maltese	45,223	1.42	Korean	54,619	1.74	82.50
ATSI	44,192	1.39	Turkish	53,858	1.71	16.57
Dutch	40,782	1.28	Polish	53,390	1.70	-14.98

*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2006*

*\* Lotes is the abbreviation for Languages other than English*

It is likely that those who speak Vietnamese or were born of Vietnamese parents would consider themselves as part of the Vietnamese community and would participate in the Vietnamese community life and activities more than those who do not speak Vietnamese. However, nobody was excluded from the community on the basis of their linguistic preference. On the contrary, the Vietnamese community leaders always encouraged the participation of young Vietnamese regardless of their Vietnamese linguistic ability.

Based on the above census figures, the number of ethnic Vietnamese forming the Vietnamese community in Australia by 2006 could be estimated to be over 200 000 people.

This figure included all those born in Australia of Vietnamese ancestry, and those born in Vietnam or in any other country of Vietnamese parents who then migrated to Australia but did not include the ethnic Chinese refugees from Vietnam.

## **The Vietnamese in France**

If it is difficult to define the exact number of ethnic Vietnamese people in Australia, it is even more difficult to do so with regard to the Vietnamese in France. There are a number of reasons explaining this difficulty. Firstly, statistics on the Vietnamese population in France from public or government records are scarce and inconsistent. The Vietnamese population is rarely reported as a separate Vietnamese group but always as part of the Indochinese group which includes those from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia (Lâm-Mais, 1995). Secondly, once a Vietnamese immigrant receives French citizenship, that person disappears from the immigrant population record completely and becomes part of the general French population, as the census of population in France (L'INSEE) does not take into account the ancestry of its population. Consequently, it was impossible to determine the exact number of those born in France of Vietnamese ancestry by using the statistics from L'INSEE.

As Indochina's former colonial power, France has long been a magnet for Vietnamese immigration (Dorais, 1998). As early as World War I, soldier workers called "Lính thợ" and students born in Vietnam were living in Paris, Nice, Marseille and several other cities (Lê Hữu Khoa, 1985). Most of the "Lính thợ" who were recruited to work in France in the two World Wars returned to Vietnam when they had completed their task. The students found themselves in the same situation. As soon as they had finished their studies in France, they returned to Vietnam in order to build up the country and to work for its independence from France. The number of Vietnamese in France at the beginning of the 1950's was estimated to be around 15,000 consisting mainly of former soldier workers, students and a small number of professionals (Lâm-Mais, 1995)

After the French withdrawal from Vietnam in 1954, a large number of Indochinese including Vietnamese holding French citizenship (those married to French men and their children and those who had worked for the French colonial administration in Vietnam) were repatriated to France. Some of them resettled in the two refugee camps, one in Noyant d'Allier (central

France), the other at Sainte Livrade (southwest France), and later lived there permanently (Simon 1981; Simon-Barouh 1981). The exact number of Vietnamese repatriated to France during that time remains unknown, as official records at the time always counted Vietnamese as part of the Indochinese and not as a separate group. However, L  m-Mais (1995) reported that many Vietnamese in France were actively involved in various political movements working for the independence of Vietnam during the Franco-Vietnam War (1945-1954) until the Geneva Agreement in 1954. The Vietnamese community in France at that time was clearly divided into two separate groups – those supporting the Vi  t Minh against the French colonial administration in Vietnam and those supporting the French colonial government.

By 1962 the number of Vietnamese in France had fallen considerably. The official record of the Minist  re de l'Int  rieur (the Ministry for Interior Affairs) recorded only 6,853 Vietnamese living in France in 1962 (L  m-Mais, 1995). France continued to welcome a significant number of people arriving from Vietnam each year during the period (1962 - 1974). The majority of them were students and people from South Vietnam who could see the possible defeat of the South Vietnam government in the near future. By 1974 the number of Vietnamese in France was recorded at 11 803, double that in 1962 (L  m-Mais, 1995).

As in Australia and many other western countries, France shared its international obligation by accepting many refugees who fled Vietnam as the result of the fall of Saigon in April 1975 when the communists took control of the whole country of Vietnam. The main waves of refugees arriving in France were similar to those in Australia, as both France and Australia took part in the same international agreements concerning Vietnamese refugees, namely the Geneva Conference in 1979, the ODP program and the Family Reunion Program, which started from 1980. L  m-Mais (1995) reported the four main waves of Vietnamese refugees arriving in France from 1975 to 1994 as follows:

First wave 1975 – 1979	(5 270 persons)
Second wave 1978 – 1980	(14 146 persons)
Third wave 1981 – 1990	(23 278 persons)
Fourth wave 1991 – 1994	(3 300 persons)

Thus, over a period of nine years around 46,000 Vietnamese refugees had resettled in France. By 1994, the number of Vietnamese arriving in France was reduced to a bare minimum of 172 persons. That was the last arrival of Vietnamese refugees in France from South East

Asian camps and the camps were closed in 1996 (Lâm-Mais, 1995). The post 1975 group of Vietnamese and their children changed the nature and composition of the Vietnamese community in France completely. As political refugees, victims of the Hanoi communist regime, they naturally had a strong anti-communist stance and did not want to have anything to do with the pro-Hanoi Vietnamese group in France. They constituted the majority among an estimated number of 250 000 ethnic Vietnamese living in France at the time of this study. The Vietnam communist government referred to them as “Việt Kiều”, as it did to all other Vietnamese refugees who had settled in other countries in the world.

### **Composition of the Vietnamese Community in France**

Because of the diverse nature of the Vietnamese population in France, the differences in their migration experiences and their ideological orientations, the composition of the ethnic Vietnamese community in France was very different from that of Australia which consisted almost entirely of Vietnamese refugees who arrived in Australia after 1975. Lê Hữu Khoa (1985) described the Vietnamese community in France as consisting of five different categories of people, based on their migration history and their personal characteristics.

- Those who migrated to France before 1945: mainly soldier workers and former students.
- Those who arrived after 1954 and before 1975: mainly those with French citizenship who were repatriated and students
- Those who migrated to France after 1975: the refugees
- The mixed race Franco-Vietnamese: those who were born either in France or in Vietnam as the offspring of a mixed marriage between a French person and a Vietnamese person
- The second generation Vietnamese who were born in France or who arrived at an early age.

Lê Hữu Khoa (1985) thus defined the Vietnamese population in France not as a homogenous group but as a complex, diverse and ever changing group with regard to its life experiences and the formation of its national, cultural and collective identity in France. He claimed that the dynamic of the community was constantly being modified by events happening in the host country, such as French economic and social crises, as well as the transformation of Vietnamese society from a feudal colonised society into a pre-capitalist then a Marxist socialist society of the Third World (Lê Hữu Khoa, 1985: 126). The consequences of these events deeply affected the life of the Vietnamese community in France and contributed to its

fragmentation. In particular, the Vietnamese community in France could be seen as two separate communities, with the boundary defined by its members' political orientation (pro-communist or anti-communist). The anti-communist Vietnamese in France did not appear to share much in common with those from the opposite political camp. Like those in Australia, the anti-communist Vietnamese in France wanted to promote the Vietnamese traditional culture rather than the contemporary culture of the Marxist values of Vietnam, as they claimed that the current Vietnamese culture had been corrupted by the communist regime in Vietnam (Viviani, 1996).

It should also be noted that, unlike those in Australia, the Vietnamese in France did not form distinct Vietnamese enclaves within the major cities of France. Most of them lived in Paris and its surrounding areas, but in some major urban centres in the south-east of France, such as Marseille and Lyon, there were quite large groups of Vietnamese-French residents (Lê Hữu Khoa, 1985; Dorais, 1998).

With regard to the number of the Vietnamese population in France at the time of this study, the researcher had to rely on a number of researchers in France, who used different methods trying to estimate the number of ethnic Vietnamese forming the Vietnamese community in France at the time. Among them were the well-known sociologist Lê Hữu Khoa (1985), two journalists Lonviny (1994) and Jelen (1993) and Trần Văn Tong (1994), an economist and statistician. Trần Văn Tong (1994) estimated that the Vietnamese population in France was around 250,000 in 1994 but Lâm-Mais (1995), using a different method of calculation, claimed that Trần Văn Tong's estimation was too high and concluded that there were only about 150,000 persons of Vietnamese origin living in France at the time. Some years later, the number of ethnic Vietnamese living in France was again estimated to be around 250,000, making it the largest East Asian community in Europe and the second largest Vietnamese community, after the United States, outside Vietnam, (Wikipedia, 2008). Compare the Vietnamese population in France in 2006 with 173,700 persons recorded as having Vietnamese ancestry, in Australia in 2006 (ABS, 2006), the Vietnamese community in France was much larger.

### ***Significance of the study***

By 2005, more than three decades after the first settlement of Vietnamese refugees in Australia and in France, the Vietnamese community has formed one of the largest ethnic groups in these two countries. Their cultural adaptation to Australia and to France merited investigation and careful documentation. This research was one of the concrete ways of acknowledging the place of the Vietnamese people and their culture in the two host countries.

This research was warmly welcomed and supported by Vietnamese Catholic community leaders, especially those who participated in the study. They wanted to see a documented study of the Vietnamese Catholic people in the host countries, as well as a record of their struggles to keep their cultural identity alive in France and Australia.

Since both France and Australia have been associated with Vietnam in educational exchange, business and trade, the findings of this study could be of great value to community leaders, educators and policy-makers in planning for the future in both societies. It was hoped that this research could help Australians, as well as French people, to gain a better understanding of Vietnamese cultural values and Vietnamese people. They would then be able to use this knowledge to establish successful cultural, educational and trade relationships with Vietnam. A better understanding of Vietnamese cultural values could help French and Australian people to develop more harmonious relationships with Vietnamese people whom they may find living in the neighbourhood or working at the same place. In this way the research could help to reduce the community tension, stereotyping, prejudice which Vietnamese immigrants living in France and in Australia have unfortunately experienced in the past.

The number of previous studies on the cultural adaptation, especially studies on linguistic maintenance of Vietnamese immigrants in Australia and in France was limited at the time of this research. There was only one major investigation, namely Lê Hữu Khoa's 1985 research, *"Les Vietnamiens en France, Insertion et Identity"*, which deals extensively with issues of social and cultural integration of Vietnamese immigrants in France. Lê Hữu Khoa's 1985 research is discussed in depth in Chapter 2. As far as the researcher is aware, there has been no research focussed exclusively on the question of Vietnamese language and



culture maintenance among Vietnamese immigrants in France at the time. Thus, this study was the first major research project to deal with such issues.

In Australia there have been a number of studies conducted on the topic of Vietnamese immigrants and refugees but almost all have focused on the economic adaptation of Vietnamese migrants. This was the case in the works of Trần Mỹ Vân and Holton (1991), Viviani, (1980, 1984, 1993, 1996), and Coughland and others (Coughland 1989, 1994, 1997, 1999). These studies are considered in detail in Chapter 2, as part of the literature review for this study. The previous studies, on the cultural adaptation and language maintenance of Vietnamese immigrants conducted in Australia, concentrated mainly on students of Vietnamese background, like the Ph D research thesis conducted by Peter Ninnes in 1995, with a sample of 201 Year 11 students from South Australia. The main findings of Ninnes' study indicated certain positive contributions which Vietnamese cultural values made to the lives of these students.

A similar conclusion was reached in the researcher's 1993 small-scale research on Vietnamese language and culture maintenance amongst tertiary students of Vietnamese background, using the humanistic conceptual framework and method (Trần thị Niên, 1993). The present study could be seen as an extension of that investigation, as it explores the cultural adaptation and language maintenance of the participants from the Vietnamese Catholic Community in Adelaide in comparison to those from the Vietnamese Catholic Community in Paris in greater depth and breadth. It also includes an examination of the perspective of the immigrant parents and identifies their influences on the cultural maintenance and transmission to their children within the family and community contexts.

### ***Limitations of the study***

This research was designed as a qualitative study, based on the analysis of 70 memoirs as the main source of data. This set of in-depth data was combined with information obtained from 400 questionnaire responses, 35 interviews and a number of community reports, newsletters and magazines. These additional sets of data provided some more widely based responses to complement the memoirs. These were more readily available in Adelaide than in Paris, where it proved difficult to make direct contact with the children of the refugees. However,

no claim has been made anywhere, on the part of the researcher, that the participants of this study were representative of the whole Vietnamese Catholic community or Vietnamese people generally, in France or Australia. The results of this study must be interpreted as belonging only to the particular groups of participants involved in the study.

Vietnamese language and culture maintenance has been the researcher's special area of interest and experience over more than 30 years. In this sense, the researcher is not to be seen as an outsider observer objectively looking at the questions being investigated, but as an active community participant who could interpret the data gathered in the light of her personal commitment to, and professional experience in, the issues being examined in this study. It must be stressed, however, that the main focus of the study is limited to the period 2000-2005, the time frame in which the data were collected. Although there are times when it has been necessary to provide important background information from earlier years to give a proper context for the data analysis, it has not been considered appropriate to make use of events and studies from the period after 2005. The exception has been the reference to information gathered in the 2006 census.

### ***Theoretical Approach and Structure of the study***

This study was conducted within the framework of humanistic sociological theory and methodology. This conceptual framework and research methodology are discussed in depth in Chapter 3. The cultural theory utilised in this investigation assumes that a group's culture is composed of various systems of cultural values such as ideological, religious, social and linguistic systems (Znaniecki, 1963; Smolicz, 1979; 1999). According to this theory, cultural value systems exist at two levels. Group systems of values can be seen to act as reservoirs from which individual members of the group construct their own personal systems of values. This humanistic sociological framework of group and personal cultural value systems has already proved very useful in analysing the memoirs and interviews of participants from a number of different ethnic backgrounds in Australia: Vietnamese tertiary students (Trần Thị Niên, 1993); Polish young people (Smolicz and Secombe, 1981); university students of different cultural backgrounds (Hudson, 1995); Ethiopian immigrants (Debela, 1996); university students of Anglo-Celtic Australian background (Secombe, 1997); immigrants of Arabic speaking background (Maadad, 2009).

The present study extends this research approach for the purpose of understanding the extent to which individuals activated distinctive Vietnamese cultural values in the Australian and French contexts, by reference to the same four cultural systems mentioned previously, namely ideological, linguistic, religious and social. Although this study was grounded in the humanistic sociological theory and methods, reference was also made, when it was appropriate in the analysis of data, to other theories of cultural adaptation, language maintenance and language shift, as described in Chapter 3.

In structure, this thesis consists of ten chapters which are organised in five main sections in the following order.

### **Section I: Introduction and Literature Review.**

This section consists of two chapters (1&2). Chapter 1 defines the aims and structure of the study and sets the social and historical contexts for the study. Chapter 2 reviews relevant cultural adaptation theories and selected literature on cultural adaptation of Vietnamese immigrants. These provide the basis for the in-depth analysis in Sections III and IV of the study.

### **Section II: Methods of Research and Details of Respondents**

This section includes two chapters (3&4). Chapter 3 discusses humanistic sociological theory and method, as well as the procedures used for the collecting of data for the study. Chapter 4 gives a summary of the participants' concrete profiles compiled from the descriptive background information obtained from the questionnaire responses.

### **Section III: Language Education, Maintenance and Transmission**

This section III includes three chapters (5, 6 & 7). Chapter 5 focuses on the examination of Vietnamese language education programs across three levels of education, and the impact of government language policies and funding support, on the maintenance and transmission of Vietnamese language in the context of France and Australia. Chapter 6 explores the linguistic adaptation experiences of the participants in France compared to those in Australia. Chapter 7 focusses on examining the linguistic proficiencies, and Vietnamese learning experiences of the participants belonging to second generation Vietnamese-Australians. It

also considers these participants' attitudes and activation of the Vietnamese linguistic system, as one of the core cultural values, in the construction of their personal cultural identity.

#### **Section IV: Vietnamese Social Systems and Cultural Identity**

This section consists of two chapters (8 & 9) which are concerned with Vietnamese Social Systems (the family and the Vietnamese Catholic community organisations). Chapter 8 examines the primary social system of the Vietnamese family and its influence on the cultural adaptation experiences of the participants in France compared to those in Australia. Chapter 9 explores the social systems of Vietnamese Catholic organisations and their role in the maintenance of Vietnamese language and culture and the formation of Vietnamese cultural identity in the context of France compared to that in Australia,

At the beginning of Chapters 6, 8 and 9, general background discussions on the Vietnamese language, Vietnamese family patterns and social structures and organisations respectively, are provided as the cultural context for the analysis of the participants' data.

#### **Section V: Conclusions.**

Chapter 10 concludes this study with a summary of key insights and comparative interpretations of the research questions examined in the study. It also discusses implications of the findings and areas in which further research could be gainfully conducted in relation to the Vietnamese immigrants in both countries, namely France and Australia.

## **Chapter 2: Cultural Adaptation Theories and the Vietnamese in Diaspora**

### ***Introduction***

This chapter consists of two main sections. The first section is a brief review of cultural adaptation theories relevant to the current study. The second section reviews studies related to the Vietnamese in Diaspora. In the first section, the researcher concentrates on some theories on cultural change among immigrant groups, with a particular emphasis on language maintenance and language shift, as applied in the Australian context.

The second section of this chapter is divided into two subsections. Subsection one begins with an overview of the volume and location of studies conducted over the last few decades on Vietnam and the Vietnamese in Diaspora followed by a review of relevant studies on Vietnamese migrants in Australia. Subsection two reviews some selected studies on the adaptation experiences of Vietnamese migrants in France.

### ***Review of Theories on Cultural Adaptation***

The following section briefly reviews some relevant theories concerning the cultural change among immigrant groups as part of their adaptation process into the host societies.

### **The Adaptation Process**

Adaptation is a concept used quite broadly in the study of ethnic groups residing within host societies. The term is defined by Richmond and Goldlust (1974: 195) as "the mutual interaction of individuals and collectivities and their response to particular physical and social environments". Adaptation is a bilateral process. Individual immigrants and larger ethnic collectivities are influenced and transformed by the host society and vice versa (Richmond and Goldlust, 1974; Berry; 1987). Richmond and Goldlust (1974) point out that the adaptation of immigrant group members is affected by both their pre-migration characteristics and conditions in their homeland of origin, and situational determinants within the host society itself. Pre-migration characteristics include the immigrant population's level of education and technical training, the existence or nonexistence of prior experiences with urbanization, demographic

characteristics of the immigrant group (including age distribution and gender balance), and the motives for migration (refugees fleeing persecution as opposed to family-sponsored or independent immigrants who come to the new country for primarily economic reasons). Richmond and Goldlust also identify several situational factors within the receiving society which may influence the trajectory of adaptation. Among these are the existing demography of the host society (which is especially relevant to the process of labour market incorporation), trends of urbanization and industrialization impacting the society as a whole, government policies (for example "multiculturalism" and other policies directed toward the integration of immigrants and minority populations), the degree of pluralism, and the level of stratification in the receiving society.

According to Richmond and Goldlust, the process of adaptation itself may be broken down into several dimensions, such as economic, cultural, social and political, each involving a different component of interaction between the migrant and the larger society. Economic adaptation is related to the socioeconomic trajectory of the immigrant in the host society. Cultural adaptation includes among other things language learning, exchange of cultural symbols between immigrants and the new society, as well as changes in their linguistic, religious or value systems and practices. Social aspects of adaptation involve the integration of immigrants into networks of primary relationships with relatives, co-ethnics, individuals belonging to other ethnic groups, and majority group members, as well as participation in formal co-ethnic institutions or those of the host society. The process of immigrant adaptation also involves political aspects, including voting behavior and the possible formation of new parties and ethnic subgroups within existing parties as well as attempts to bring about change in host society institutions (Richmond and Goldlust, 1974).

Finally, ethnic group adaptation involves important socio-psychological or subjective dimensions. Subjective aspects include changes in group identification, attitudinal and value changes, as well as the level of satisfaction of the individual immigrant with his or her life in the host society (Richmond and Goldlust, 1974; Berry, 1987). While other components of adaptation are not completely ignored, as sometimes elements are overlapping, closely connected and influencing each other in the process, the primary focus of this study is upon the socio-cultural aspects of the adaptation process of Vietnamese migrants in Australia and in France.

## **Models of Adaptation**

There are a number of approaches which have been posited by social scientists to account for the immigrant adaptation in English speaking societies such as USA, Canada and Australia. The following is a brief discussion of merits and limitations of several perspectives influential in contemporary scholarly accounts of immigrant group adaptation.

### **Assimilation Model**

The assimilation model takes it as virtually inevitable that ethnic minority group members will eventually conform to and adopt the cultural standards of the dominant population and integrate into the social structure of the larger urban, industrial modern society. The assimilation model posits that all ethnic groups, regardless of national origin or ethnic or racial background, tend to be drawn into the economic mainstream over a period of time, gaining social acceptance in the larger society through the educational and occupational achievements of individual members. Thus, it is argued, distinctive ethnic cultural traits will disappear with time in the host country (Hirschman, 1982; Morawska, 1990). Ethnic group activities may serve the short-term function of easing adjustment to a new society but in the long-run will cease as the inevitable processes of assimilation occur among individual group members. Much of the research influenced by the assimilation model is concerned with the cultural, psychological, and socioeconomic changes that occur in the lives of migrant individuals with time in the host country and little attention is paid to the collective dimension of adjustment among group members. Yet immigrants first and foremost belong to households, families and ethnic communities, and the analysis of their adaptation should pay attention to their use of the networks existing within these varied entities (Hein, 1995). In a related vein, certain social scientists have criticized the insufficient room the assimilation model allows for the personal agency of ethnic group members within the adaptation process. Assimilation theorists devote most of their attention to the impact of larger societal forces upon group members while not giving much consideration to the influence of individual group members upon their own adaptation.

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Another common criticism of the assimilation model is its implicit assumption that the host society has a unitary core culture for migrants to integrate into (Rumbaut, 1997a, Rumbaut, 1997b; Zhou, 1997). In the case of the U.S., Canada and Australia, presumably this core culture is that belonging to white persons of European, and specifically English speaking ancestry. This assumption, however, is inconsistent with

the realities of contemporary urban North America, where a considerable number of ethnic minority groups make up substantial portions of the population. Indeed, in many U.S. urban areas, new immigrants move to inner city neighborhoods where minority groups such as Hispanics and African-Americans are the majority of the population. These new immigrants, including several Asian and Hispanic groups, interact on a daily basis with other ethnic minority groups as opposed to persons of white European origin. In addition, defining a set of core American, Canadian or Australian cultural values is an extremely problematic, if not impossible, task. Ethnic pluralism and class inequality structure the populations of these nations. Given these facts, it may be very difficult to discern exactly what ethnic group members should be assimilating to in these host countries. Another limitation of the assimilation model is its primary focus upon the immigrant group member and his or her ability to adjust and become incorporated into the host society. Scholars writing from an assimilationist perspective tend to ignore or downplay changes immigrants bring to the host society itself.

There were a number of scholars including Gordon (1964), Taft (1965) and Smolicz (1979) who suggested that assimilation was the policy generally adopted in Australia toward minority groups prior to the 1970s. It assumed that new immigrants from non-English speaking countries, when arrived in Australia, they had to learn English and the way of life of the dominant group (Anglo-Saxon). Minority groups had to abandon their cultural patterns and learn to become like the majority cultural group, but the dominant group did not change at all (Smolicz, 1979). The assimilation model of immigrants was taken for granted at all levels of governments and in all parts of Australian society, including the Catholic church. However, through the 1970s and 1980s assimilation was being challenged as the appropriate model of interaction between two or more cultural groups in contact. In Australia the assimilation model was replaced by a multicultural model in the mid-1970s.

### **Cultural Pluralism**

The cultural pluralism model of ethnic group adaptation arose in response to the presumed deficiencies of the assimilationist approach. Pluralist theorists have argued that ethnicity has persisting staying power both as a facet of personal identity and as a basis for collective organisation (Hune, 1991; Omi and Winant, 1994). Ethnic communities are seen as providing a sense of physical and psychological security that



comes from the familiar and dependable. Over time, despite socioeconomic mobility among individual members, ethnic groups may remain as bases of solidarity and primary interaction, allowing immigrant group members to meet expressive as well as more instrumental needs.

The pluralist model does not dismiss the possibility of integration into the social and economic institutional structures of the host society. It does, however, posit such integration to be difficult for many ethnic group members to achieve in the first generation, especially for those who have been strongly socialized in their original culture. After the second and third generations though, it is believed that group members may turn away from traditional institutions and cultural values. Importantly, however, this process is not necessarily associated with the loss of individual ethnic traits and cultural identity as presumed by the assimilation model (Zhou, 1992). Among those scholars who advocate for culturally pluralistic societies, there are different approaches and suggestions.

Smolicz (1979) argued that cultural pluralism was the only way to create a fair and successful society for Australia and other ethnically diverse societies. He distinguished two main forms of interactions between two or more cultures in a plural society. He named the first "Separatism" or "external cultural pluralism" (Smolicz, 1979:80) which implied the co-existence of separate cultural groups in society with very little interaction among them. An individual, in this instance, could choose to embrace extensively the cultural values of his/her own group, but the society overall would be pluralistic. It consisted in this model, societal cultural variations but not individual cultural variations. The second, when individuals themselves adopted elements of each interacting culture and consciously activated them in different situations, Smolicz (1979:80) named that a dual system of personal interaction and defined it "internal cultural pluralism". In arguing for the internal pluralistic model as the most effective to the preservation of cultural diversity and social cohesion for a plural society like Australia, Smolicz emphasized the importance of the whole population agreed on sharing a set of overarching values Smolicz (1989:10-14) Smolicz's concept of plural society as a model for cultural adaptation forms the basic framework of analysis for the current study and it is fully explained in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

Gordon (1964) proposed two alternative models for cultural interactions in a plural society. For the first model he suggested that when two ethnic groups culturally interacting and sharing with each other, each group could change and contribute to the formation of a new single cultural group which consisted of elements of the two original groups, but totally different from either of them. This "melting pot" model was similar to what Smolicz (1979) called "hybrid monism". The melting pot model has never become a reality in Australia because of the emphasis on assimilation, then moved quickly to multiculturalism. Multiculturalism was also articulated by Gordon as his second alternative for creating a culturally stable plural society. Thus, what is the nature and effectiveness of multiculturalism in the Australian context?

### **Multiculturalism**

There are various conceptions of multiculturalism, often contrasting and conflicting. The word multiculturalism is generally assumed to have originated in Canada. In Australia, the term began to be used in the mid-1970s when Grassby was Minister for Immigration in the Whitlam Government. The meaning of multiculturalism has never been agreed upon. In a descriptive sense multiculturalism is simply a term which describes the existence of cultural and ethnic diversity in a society. This term has also tended to carry certain policy and planning implications. In this sense Smolicz (1984:13) perceives multiculturalism as being located between "assimilationist and the separatist approaches". Smolicz differentiates three types of multiculturalism depending on the degree of language and culture maintenance that it permits or encourages. The first is referred to as residual multiculturalism when the core ethnic culture elements, especially ethnic languages are reduced to residual elements such as food and folklore (Smolicz,1984:15). His second form of multiculturalism is transitional multiculturalism. This refers to a situation in which the government funds for teaching community languages are allocated merely for a transitional and very limited period and not for the long-standing maintenance of children's mother tongues. A third category of multiculturalism is called "internal or stable multiculturalism". Under stable multicultural policy, all members of the society, including those from the majority group, have the opportunity to acquire aspects of other Australian cultures. The learning of a particular community language by any other majority or ethnic group

members "represents cultural pluralism at its deepest and most meaningful level" (Smolicz 1981:10).

Stephen Castles (1993) divided the history of multiculturalism in Australia into three phases. The first phase, the push for migrant rights, took place in the early 1970s and resulted in the establishment of ethnic organisations and their linkage to the political process. The second phase was on cultural pluralism, which extended to the mid-1980s in which the Fraser Government redefined multiculturalism to emphasise cultural pluralism and the role of ethnic organisations in providing welfare services to migrants. At the same time Fraser emphasised multiculturalism as a way of achieving a national identity, through social cohesion, in an ethnically diverse society. The third phase, called access and equity, came about from the mid-1980s was pushed along by the critique of Asian migration and multiculturalism (Castles 1993: 188ff). The consequent new approach to multiculturalism was set out in the National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia (OMA 1989) in which the three important words were cultural identity, social justice and economic efficiency. Multiculturalism in this sense was a system of rights and freedoms limited by an overarching commitment to the nation, a duty to accept the Constitution and the rule of law, and the acceptance of the basic principles of tolerance and equality, English as the national language and equality of the sexes. Multiculturalism, as Castles pointed out, was not then defined as cultural pluralism or minority rights but in terms of cultural, social and economic rights of all citizens in a democratic state. Authors such as Castles, Jupp and Smolicz strongly believed that multiculturalism was the only possible formula for managing both social policy and identity when it reached its stable and coherent form.

Those who opposed multiculturalism, such as Blainey, Pratte, Poole and Patterson, saw multiculturalism as the '*pluralist fallacy*' which could not work as a social policy. Blainey (1984:22) claimed in the era after the gold rushes, Australians had "experienced what is called a multicultural society. Their experience convinced them that such a society did not work." The anti-multiculturalists perceived ethnicity as a nuisance, even as dangerous and harmful to social cohesion. Heisler (1992: 635) said that

*...multiculturalism may be appealing as an ideal but may be difficult if not impossible to accomplish. More importantly, the question arises whether true multiculturalism is possible without destroying the society and the political community.*

Patterson (1975: 11) argued that “cultural pluralism neglects individuality in so far as an emphasis on group diversity and group tolerance works against a respect for individuality” There was a fear that multiculturalism would create strong ethnic groups which were capable of making increasing demands on the government for the benefit of those who were in power within these ethnic groups. Poole (1985:59) believed in limiting cultural diversity to the private domain. In order to attain 'Unity within Diversity', 'we need to transcend ethnocentrism and construct uniquely Australian core values, universally shared in the public domain, while encouraging cultural diversity in the private domain'. Some skeptics of multiculturalism claimed that poverty and deprivation could not be linked to cultural and linguistic suppression, especially in reference to those of lower class background, since 'no amount of cultural enhancement will alleviate structural inequalities' (Jayasuriya 1985:31).

Given the resistance, in some quarters, to multiculturalism as an ideology in Australia, in the 1980s and 1990s, a new perspective emerged concentrating on social inclusion and citizenship. This movement tried to redefine citizenship as 'including new members of society in existing rights and extending the range of rights available to all citizens'. (Viviani 1996:140) Viviani believed that the citizenship model gives

*a much firmer foundation for the discussion of rights in multi-ethnic societies since, unlike the ideology of multiculturalism, which is generally perceived to be conferring special benefits on minorities, this movement has a class, gender and ethnic basis to it and is much less threatening to the groups in power since it rests on an appeal to the existing political norms and institutions*

Thus, in contrast to the bipartisan support through the 1970s and 1980s multiculturalism has had little political support at the top levels in Australia since then. Instead, some social scientists have started to argue for an equitable society through citizenship rights now. Multiculturalism has been seen as an articulation of the second of Gordon's alternatives, namely “pluralism”. Pluralism was conceived as the antithesis of assimilation, and involved the coexistence of dominant and minority groups in such a way that a diversity of cultural patterns was maintained, but without any emphasis on overarching values shared by all members of society which was a central concept in Smolicz's theoretical formulation of a multicultural society.

## **Language Maintenance and Shift**

As the focus of this study is to examine the levels of language shift and language maintenance among Vietnamese immigrants living in Adelaide compared with those living in Paris, it is appropriate to review some relevant theories in the field, in the next sections of this chapter.

### **Different Theoretical Approaches**

According to Clyne (1991:54) the terms “language maintenance” and “language shift” were initially used by Fishman (1966) in his studies of languages. These two concepts refer to “the changes in the linguistic behaviour of an entire speech community or a group or one individual within that community” over a period of time. “Language shift” is even more ambiguous to define because it can mean a gradual development or loss of a particular language or it can also mean a change in language use patterns.

**Language shift** can mean the following:

- (1) change from the main/dominant language to another language totally or partly;
- (2) change in one or more domains of language use – such as home, work, school, church;
- (3) change due to linguistic interference or code switching (change from one language to the other in one sentence) or
- (4) change in the level of competence in four main language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) Clyne (1991a).

Language maintenance and language shift have happened in many countries receiving migrants such as USA, Canada and Australia. The immigrant groups, in this instance, have often experienced language shifts towards the language of the dominant group due to various reasons including the government settlement policies at the time. Language shift or language loss has also occurred in countries where the colonisers imposed their language on the colonised groups as part of their policy of colonisation. The colonial history of Vietnam had shown that the Vietnamese people had the tenacity to fight against the Chinese then the French to keep their language instead of shifting towards the language of the colonisers.

However, the concern of this thesis is the first case which is language maintenance and language shift of the Vietnamese immigrants in Australia and in France.

### **Link between language and other aspects of culture**

When examining the relationship between language and ethnicity Fishman (1989) has argued that language plays a vital role through which culture is manifest, maintained among members of the group and transmitted to future generations. He recognized several important roles of language stating that "language is the recorder of paternity, the expresser of patrimony, and the carrier of phenomenology" Fishman (1989: 32). This means that language is the main way thorough which primary relationships among descendants are formed and developed (paternity). Language is also a means of expressing and transmitting family cultural traditions, customs and values among members of the family (patrimony), and a means to explore and interpret meanings of certain events or behaviors occurred around us in society (phenomenology). Thus, language is indeed vital to our family and social life as human beings and studying factors influencing our language use will help us to understand how cultural change has occurred in the process of cultural adaptation.

Smolicz (1979) believed that language maintenance is crucial to the preservation of cultures of immigrant groups in a pluralistic society, especially for those groups who consider language as their core cultural value such as the Greeks, the Italians and the Poles. The decline or loss of their mother tongue is a clear indicator of assimilation and it could pose a threat to their collective identity as a distinctive ethnic group. In this thesis Vietnamese language is considered as one of the core cultural values of the Vietnamese immigrant communities in Australia and in France. The Vietnamese language is very rich in oral history with metaphors and proverbs which describe people's behaviours and the moral codes of a distinctive Vietnamese culture of more than four-thousand-year history. It is hoped that the analysis of the Vietnamese language use among the participants in this study will reveal the extent to which the Vietnamese language has played in the maintenance and transmission of the Vietnamese cultural values to second generation, and in particular to understand how the Vietnamese cultural systems have changed in the process of cultural adaptation into the host societies namely Australia and France.

## **Smolicz's Concept of Language Maintenance**

Smolicz is well known in Australia and overseas for his strong advocacy for language and culture maintenance for ethnic minority groups in a plural society. He has argued that lasting internal cultural pluralism can only be achieved in a society like Australia if the state national education system makes provision for the maintenance and transmission of ethnic languages and cultures. This will allow the children of both minority and majority groups the opportunity to continue to learn and develop the culture and language that they have already acquired from their home. For Smolicz education is the key for achieving long lasting multiculturalism in a pluralistic society. Thus, in the Australian context, he suggested a state education system from primary to tertiary level, which provides opportunities for all students to:

- 1) learn the dominant language (English) and the shared values of society*
- 2) learn their mother tongue in its cultural context*
- 3) have access to another language (a mother tongue or a language of trade)*
- 4) understand and value the multicultural nature of society and appreciate the cultures of other groups.*

Smolicz believed that “such educational programs will create a balanced educational outcome for all members of society and help to maintain and develop the languages and cultures of ethnic groups for the benefit of all” (Secombe and Zajda, 1999: 67-68).

It was noted that many of the early studies conducted by Smolicz and his colleagues (Smolicz and Harris, 1977) on the topic of language maintenance and language shift in Australia showed different levels of shifting from their mother tongue to English among all the samples of students selected from primary, secondary and tertiary levels and who were of Polish, Italian, Dutch, Greek, and Latvian backgrounds. They concluded that for a community language to be alive and viable in Australia it needs to be used exclusively in the home, extended family, religious services and ethnic community activities while English is used at work, in mainstream schools and other public places. Smolicz (1979) explained that the difference in level of language shift among ethnic groups occurs because of their positive or negative attitudes towards their mother tongue itself. Thus, the language-centered groups like the Poles, show higher level of language maintenance compared to those which are not, such as those of Italian descent.

Clyne (1991a) pointed out that Smolicz's conclusion in this instance, was not supported by evidence of the 1986 census as people of Italian descent, in this census reported greater use of the mother tongue than those of Polish descent. Smolicz's definition of ethnic group boundaries without taking into account of the fact that one speech community can consist of several nationalities and his lack of consideration for multiple group membership have been challenged by Clyne (1991a) because in Australia one individual person can belong to more than one ethnic group. Smolicz's method of self-selecting participants for his research has also been criticised by McNamara (1988a) as possible bias.

### **Fishman's Concept of Language Shift**

Fishman (1981) has developed an important theory which identifies the effect of inter-group social dependency as one of the factors influencing language shift in a plural society such as Australia. Upward social mobility is often the ultimate goal for many people migrated to Australia. If the first generation immigrants could not achieve this goal for themselves, they would work hard to achieve this reward for their children generation. Fishman has argued that, in a dominant society like Australia, the society structure can be constructed in such a way that only those immigrants who can speak the dominant language (English) well and have the ability to interact with the dominant language speakers can reach these rewards. Upward social mobility, in this instance, is depending on the immigrant's competence in the dominant language, his/her social status is also marked by his/her English ability while his/her mother tongue is neglected and devalued. Fishman (1981:51) warned that "what begins as the language of social and economic mobility, ends, within three generations or so, as the language of the crib as well". The shift from mother tongue towards the dominant language becomes dangerously fast when the immigrant community considers the dominant language as a distinguished status marker of its members and they accept the normality for the dominant language to be used in the home and in community activities. This seems to be consistent with Smolicz's argument in favour of using mother tongue in the home all the time in order to foster long term language maintenance. The economic reward structure may not have the same appeal to descendant generations, or older well-established immigrants. They may realize that to become like the dominant group has not always helped them to achieve the



expected rewards and their need of returning to their own language and culture is more fulfilling as a person. Thus, they may begin a process of re-vitalizing their mother tongue, a process which Fishman (1991) terms reversing language shift. At the time of this current study, the majority of people forming the Vietnamese Community in Australia and in France are of the first migrant generation, the main aim of this study is to examine the extent to which the Vietnamese language has been maintained or shifted towards the host language namely French and English, and to identify the factors contributing to this Vietnamese language shift.

### **Ethnolinguistic Identity Approach**

Giles and Johnson (1987) have argued that ethnolinguistic identity theory can be used as a new approach to explore the “variables and mechanisms involved in the maintenance of an ethnic language indifferent social settings”. The ethnolinguistic identity model proposed by Giles and Johnson (1987) consists of three notions namely ethnolinguistic vitality, inter-group relations and speech accommodation as processes which influence language maintenance and language shift of minority groups in society. Giles et al. (1977) suggested that there are three main groups of factors influencing “ethnolinguistic vitality” of an ethnic group namely *status factors* such as their group’s economic or political status, their perceived social status and the status of their language in the wider society; *demographic factors* such as the numbers of their group membership, their geographical concentration and *institution support* for their ethnic language such as the recognition of their language by the government, in the media, in education programs. Giles et al. (1977) stated that ethnic groups with high vitality are most likely to succeed in maintaining their language and their ethnic identity as distinctive groups while those with low vitality are often moved towards assimilation. When considering intergroup relationship and its impact on the language maintenance, Giles and Johnson (1987) confirmed that members of a minority ethnic group who identify themselves very strongly to an ethnic group which considers language as a core component of its identity, are more likely prepared to act “in terms of their ethnic solidarity” rather than conforming to societal norms and they are more likely to maintain their ethnic language. In contrast those who consider language not important to their group identity and

their connection with their ethnic group is weak, are likely to act according to societal norms rather than the norms of their in-group and they are less likely wanting to maintain their ethnic language. This shows clearly that the processes of language maintenance according to this theory involved not only the individual person but it is also a group process since people make decisions and enact appropriate communication strategies with respect to language maintenance.

Thus, ethnolinguistic identity theory has some relevance and some limitations if applied to the current study of Vietnamese language maintenance in Australia and in France. This theory could be used to explore the attitudes of the participants towards the Vietnamese language and their perception of the role of Vietnamese language in relation to the Vietnamese group identity. This theory seems to be limited by its focus on intergroup communication situations only. Another limitation is the fact that the majority of the Vietnamese people who participate in the current study would not be fully bilingual so their choice of language use could be limited for them and for those with whom they interact at the time of this study.

### **Factors Influencing Language Maintenance in the Australian Context**

By reviewing many studies in the area of language maintenance and shift, Clyne agreed with Kloss (1966) and others that there are a number of important factors which could produce positive or negative effects on the language maintenance and language shift of immigrant groups in the Australian migration contexts. A summary of factors identified by Clyne (1985, 1991a) is listed below:

#### **Factors influencing language maintenance positively:**

- 1) age on migration arrival (adults and children older than 12 have a better chance to maintain their mother tongue);
- 2) high status and usefulness of the mother tongue as perceived by the ethnic community and the wider society promote language maintenance;
- 3) educational status of the mother tongue (widely taught as subject in all three levels of education as well as ethnic schools; studying mother tongue at school and take mother tongue as a year 12 examination subject); (these are vital to language maintenance);

- 4) state and federal policies on languages and multiculturalism which promote language maintenance and bilingual programs;
- 5) attending religious services and social and cultural events conducted in the mother tongue promote language maintenance;
- 6) the presence and accessibility of grandparents, relatives recently arrived from countries of the mother tongue promotes language maintenance;
- 7) parents' consistent use of the mother tongue with children at home and at appropriate public places such as ethnic church and ethnic community places and shops (this promotes language maintenance a great deal);
- 8) in-group marriages promote language maintenance;
- 9) access to media in the mother tongue such as newspapers, books, videos, films, promotes language maintenance;
- 10) trips to parents' home land promote language maintenance.

**Factors influencing language maintenance negatively, causing language shift**

- 1) period of residence; language declines with years of residence for young people;
- 2) age; language shift increases with age in second generation and language maintenance increases with age in the first generation;
- 3) gender (females show less language shift than males);
- 4) exogamy is detrimental to language maintenance, causing language shift;
- 5) state and federal settlement policies aiming to assimilate immigrants and undermine their language and culture maintenance.

Clyne (1985, 1991a) pointed out that, the same factors can have opposite outcomes depending on the situations. In some contexts, they promote greater language maintenance but in others they cause language shift. It should be noted that so far there is no consensus among researchers in the field, explaining how such factors, in different contexts, can produce contradictory results. However, there is a strong support for the factors identified by Clyne (1985, 1991a) in Australia and overseas, especially in countries such as USA, Canada and New Zealand which have a similar history of migration like Australia.

## ***Review of Selected Studies Related to Vietnamese in Diaspora***

### **An Overview of Research Studies**

The little country of Vietnam which stretches 1,650 km from the North to the South, exceedingly not more than 600 km across its widest point in the North and 50 km at its narrowest in the Centre, has become very well known in the world because of its political struggle for independence first against its powerful Chinese neighbour, then the French and, finally, the Americans. Over three thousand books on this subject have been written. Since 1986 when the Vietnamese government introduced the new economic policy called "Đổi mới", there has been a constant efflorescence of academic studies on Vietnam and its political and economic situations.

Soon after the end of the war in 1975, there were many books and articles giving accounts of the sufferings and hardships of the boat people leaving Vietnam as refugees and their settlement in different countries in the world. Although it is over four decades since the first settlement of Vietnamese boat people in Western countries, academic research interest continues. Mark Pfeiter (2011), the editor of the Vietnamese Studies Internet Resource Centre (VSIRC), has compiled a comprehensive online index of Vietnamese Studies which has been available at [www.vietnamesestudies.org](http://www.vietnamesestudies.org). The Vietnamese Studies Internet Resource Center is an online source of comprehensive information related to the cross-disciplinary field of Vietnamese Studies. It includes an online research article library, extensive subject bibliographies and detailed U.S. Census data as well as other resources.

The VSIRC index lists a few thousand studies, books and articles on Vietnam and the Vietnamese in Diaspora for the period 1954-2011, and classifies them in sixteen different categories. For example, in the category called Socio-Cultural Adaptation of the Vietnamese Diaspora alone, there are 646 entries for the period 1975-2011. Almost all of these studies were conducted in the United States with a small number done in Canada and other countries. Very few titles listed on this website are from Australia and France. For this reason, the section below discusses the selected studies in some depth.

## **Selected Studies of Vietnamese Migrants in Australia**

The volume of studies conducted on the Vietnamese migrants and refugees in Australia since the arrival of the first group of Vietnamese refugees in 1975 is relatively small compared with those conducted in USA. They can be classified in two different categories, namely, those related to settlement issues or socioeconomic adaptation and those related to cultural adaptation, with particular emphasis on the maintenance of Vietnamese language and culture.

### **Studies Related to Socio-Economic Adaptation**

In this category, the researcher noted a number of authors, but relevant to the present study, this discussion concentrates on only two, namely Viviani and Coughlan. These two authors have conducted valuable studies on the settlement and socioeconomic adaptation of the Vietnamese in Australia since the arrival of the first group of Vietnamese refugees in 1975. Some aspects of their work which are directly related to the current investigation are discussed in the following section of this chapter.

#### **Nancy Viviani's Studies**

Nancy Viviani is Professor of International Politics at Griffith University in Queensland. She was formerly Professor of Political Science at the Australian National University and has held senior appointments in government and in the United Nations. Viviani has conducted extensive research on the settlement of Indochinese refugees, including the Vietnamese refugees in Australia.

Viviani's first major study on Vietnamese migrants in Australia was *The Long Journey: Vietnamese Migration and Settlement in Australia (1984)*. The main focus of this study examined issues related to the settlement of the Vietnamese refugees in Brisbane based on a sample of 120 heads of household of Vietnam-born people (42% or 50 heads of household were ethnic Vietnamese and 58% or 70 heads of household were ethnic Chinese) who had settled in Brisbane at the time. Thus, by nature this study could not be seen as an accurate representation of the settlement experiences of all Vietnamese refugees in Australia at the time because of differences in circumstances and in the number of Vietnamese refugees settled in each state at the time. Since the 1970s until the time of this research in 2004, the number of Vietnam-born persons settled in Queensland was only around 7-8 per cent. However, this study is valuable as it was the first study which offered a comprehensive discussion on the questions of who the

Vietnamese were, why they left their country, how they entered Australia and, most importantly, how they have been treated here.

Viviani's discussion in this study covered a wide range of social and cultural issues but focused on economic and social mobility. She argued that the very high rate of unemployment (57%), for the Vietnamese at the time, was in part related to poor labour market conditions in Brisbane at the time, and also to the distance between the migrant centre and factory workplace locations. She also argued that chances of the Vietnamese achieving employment increased with length of residence and that downward social mobility occurred due to a combination of lack of English competence and lack of recognition of overseas qualifications. The issue of residential concentration and its impact on the wider community was also discussed. The theme of usage of government services and its effectiveness were also considered in this study. It was pointed out that for the Vietnamese, "the family is the welfare service" rather than the government. Although the Vietnamese did use a range of on-arrival and settlement services, they often relied on informal family and community networks both in relation to employment and social services.

While discussing the issues concerning Vietnamese settlement, Viviani also set their story in the context of the larger exodus of Indochinese, and the responses of Australia and other countries to that situation. Viviani's study has a particular point of interest to the researcher's present investigation as it sought to distinguish the social and cultural attributes of two groups of refugees who came from Vietnam – those of ethnic Chinese and those of ethnic Vietnamese. These two groups were very different from each other in their group cultural identity and in the ways they integrated into the new society. In other studies, these two groups have often been lumped together and the question of ethnic identity differences was often ignored. The issues of unemployment and residential concentration of Vietnamese migrants were again thoroughly examined in 1993 by Nancy Viviani in co-operation with James Coughlan and Trevor Rowland in a report for the Bureau of Immigration Research entitled *Indochinese in Australia: the Issues of Unemployment and Residential Concentration*. In this report the issues of unemployment and residential concentration of Vietnamese migrants were studied based on the 1986 census data, as well as other data collected from a Brisbane survey (1990-91) of 393 Indochinese households of which 341 households were originally from Vietnam. According to this report, there were strong indications that many

Indochinese, and many Vietnamese in particular were integrated into Australian society relatively well. However, this report also pointed out that some isolated groups of Vietnamese were not able to integrate as well because of high unemployment and residential concentration.

The themes explored in Viviani's (1984) book were followed up in the larger context of her second book, *The Indochinese in Australia 1975-1995: from Burnt Boats to Barbecues*. This book was based on data collected through various studies Viviani had conducted on the Vietnamese community and the Indochinese communities over the years. This book was written for Australians and especially for those who were in government policy decision-making positions. For the latter group, this book could have been of some help when they had to make decisions directly affecting the lives of these immigrants. It gave a fairly accurate account of significant changes in Australian society since the 70's and how these changes had affected the settlement of Indochinese immigrants in Australia. It examined the ways in which the Indochinese immigrants coped with changes in society, both in terms of getting ahead of and falling behind other Australians. It was not only a story about the individual life experiences of Indochinese immigrants, but also about relationships between the Indochinese and other Australians.

This book was written twenty years after the first settlement of Vietnamese refugees in Australia in 1975 following the fall of Saigon in April 1975. According to the author, the Vietnamese refugees formed the first and most difficult test case of the outcomes of the abolition of the White Australian policy 20 years earlier. Just imagine what it would have been like for the Vietnamese if they came to Australia during the White Australian policy in the 50's and 60's. Viviani believed that 20 years was perhaps long enough, at least in political and social terms, to see some meaning in the patterns and the dynamics of the settlement of the Vietnamese immigrants in Australia as the first Australian-born generation of Vietnamese refugees were then reaching adulthood.

Five major issues which were considered important to the Indochinese and other Australians namely, the politics of entry and settlement; residential concentration; employment and unemployment; Indochinese living inside and outside their communities; and social relations between Indochinese and Australians, were discussed in depth, in this book. It was argued that the government had failed to provide specific policy directions and effective settlement services (English language courses, education

and job opportunities) to the Indochinese refugees when they arrived in Australia. As a result, they suffered the inevitable consequences, such as high unemployment, high residential concentration in poor areas, which in turn created social problems among young unemployed Indochinese, including young Vietnamese. Another theme of the book was the disproportionate level of attention given in public and policy debates to what was, after all, a small group of people from Indochina.

Viviani also discussed the confusion and division among scholars and the wider community with regard to the policy and ideology of multiculturalism. She argued that Australia had lost its way on this issue and that a review of our national priorities on managing a multi-ethnic and multi-racial society was long overdue. A social inclusion and citizenship model was proposed as an alternative model. If the citizenship rights of every immigrant were widely accepted, then it would create the first step for political change, social entitlements, and cultural tolerance even if it could do little about the enduring sources of economic inequality. In Viviani's view when a citizenship discourse was allied with the cause of equality, it was more powerful than the doctrine of multiculturalism.

The method of research used in the book was eclectic which means that Viviani drew on several disciplines and conceptual frameworks to explore the five issues. This book did not give an in-depth account of the settlement of the Vietnamese or the Khmer or the Lao people. It provided only one possible explanation relating to both changing structures and attributes that could help us to gain some insights into the many layers of experiences of people from these three communities. The main question asked concerned the response of Australian society to the refugees *Is Australian society still sufficiently open in its structures and social attitudes to allow Indochinese to get ahead in the ways that earlier migrants have?* To answer this question the author based her study on national census data and previous studies carried out by James Coughlan (1989) and her own previous studies in 1984 in Brisbane as well as studies carried out by others in Sydney and other parts of Australia. Viviani based her analysis on the context of changes at national level and also compared where appropriate, the experiences of Indochinese with other Australians and other migrant groups.

By the end of the book it seemed that the answer was more on the negative side than on the positive one. The change in the Vietnamese community in the areas of employment



and residential concentration had not happened as quickly as the author had expected. She believed that second and third generations of Australia-born of Vietnamese immigrants would change the picture of the Vietnamese community over the next twenty years. It is now more than twenty years since Viviani's 1996 book was written and over thirty years after the first settlement of Vietnamese people in Australia. The present investigation aimed to update the picture in relation to the Vietnamese community in Adelaide to see if there were any differences.

### **James Coughlan's Studies**

James Coughlan is a senior lecturer in sociology at James Cook University, Queensland. Since very early in his academic life he has been interested in the study of Vietnamese refugees and migrants in Australia. The main source of Coughlan's data for almost all of his studies of Vietnamese immigrants in Australia is based on cross-sectional census data over the period from 1976 to 1996. In 1989, the Centre for the Study of Australian-Asian Relations, Griffith University, published a series of nine monographs, through which Coughlan analysed census data from 1976-1986 to produce a demographic, economic, social and educational profile of the Indochinese immigrants in Australia, including the Vietnamese. His line of argument here was very similar to that of Viviani. He argued at the time that the Vietnamese had striking low levels of educational credentials and poor English language competence. This effectively trapped them in unskilled or semi-skilled employment or unemployment, except for younger people who were able to obtain educational qualifications in Australia.

Tran and Holton (1991) argued that Coughlan presented a very pessimistic assessment of the upward social mobility chances of adult Vietnamese migrants. In fact their Vietnamese social mobility in Australia study (1975-1990) based on a sample of 628 adult Vietnamese (403 persons in New South Wales and 225 persons in South Australia) showed that, during a relatively short period of time, the Vietnamese in those two states had been able to overcome considerable obstacles in order to achieve significant advances in upward social mobility. However, this study also pointed out that problems of concentration in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, high and protracted unemployment, failure to recognise overseas skills and qualifications and restricted mobility changes for women were prominent features of the settlement process for the Vietnamese people.

Based on the analysis of the results of 1991 census data Coughlan (1994) again produced a comprehensive profile of the Vietnamese community at the time with its demographic, economic and social characteristics. Overall, there were some significant changes which occurred during this period. Census data shows that between 1986 and 1991 the Vietnam-born population in Australia increased substantially (+ 47.3%). The 1991 census figures also show that the Vietnamese community is a younger community compared with some of the more established migrant groups. 65.5% of the Viet-Nam born persons were aged less than 35 years and the median age of this community in 1991 was 29.9 years, up from 26.2 years in 1986. There was evidence that second generation Vietnamese, namely those born in Australia from parents of Vietnamese background, and those who arrived in Australia at an early age (generation 1.5) had started to have a positive impact on the socioeconomic profile of the community. This situation is consistent with what happened in Vietnamese communities in other countries (e.g. USA, Canada and France) and with the findings of other researchers in Australia.

Finally, the paper containing the most recent information on the Vietnamese community in Australia which was of direct relevance to the current research is Coughlan's (1999) article entitled *A profile of the Vietnamese in Contemporary Australia*. This paper was published in the James Jupp edited volume (2001) *The Australian People: An Encyclopedia of the Nation, Its People and Their Origins* and it gave the most recent demographic, social and economic characteristics of the Vietnamese community in Australia. Based on the 1996 census data, the analyses showed some significant changes in the demographic and socio-economic profile of the Vietnamese-Australian community.

First, this paper pointed out a demographic attributes change in the sex-ratio of the Vietnamese-Australian community for the first time. The 1996 census counted an almost equal number of males and females born in Vietnam - 75,247 males and 75,806 females giving a sex-ratio of 0.99. This was the first time since the first arrival of Vietnamese refugees in the mid-1970s that an Australian census enumerated more Vietnam-born females than males. There were also approximately 67,000 additional members born in Australia or outside of Australia and Vietnam at the end of 1999 and that about 98% of this group of people were school aged youth, less than 20 years of age which made the Vietnamese-Australian community a relatively young and vibrant community. This paper also reported a clear indication of community integration and

commitment to Australia through the very high proportion of Vietnam-born people taking up Australian citizenship over the years. By mid-1996, 94% of the eligible Vietnam-born community had already acquired Australian citizenship, a rate much higher than that of most other immigrant communities.

In terms of spatial distribution, approximately 40% of the Vietnamese community resided in New South Wales, 37% in Victoria and 7% each in Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. These figures showed no substantial change in the spatial distribution of Vietnamese-Australian community since the early 1990s.

This paper also proves that frequent reports in the media on the formation of Vietnamese "ghettos" were not accurate. Evidence shows that there were only a small minority of enclaves of Vietnamese in the Cities of Dandenong, and Maribyrnong in Victoria and Fairfield in New South Wales but not the large ethnic enclaves as often reported in the media.

English language proficiency was still a problem, especially with female Vietnam-born members of the community. Coughlan suggested that this was one of the indicators of the failure of multicultural policy, as it had been unable to help Vietnamese refugees, especially Vietnamese females, to gain sufficient language and social skills in order to integrate into the economic life of the Australian society.

As with previous studies, this paper showed high unemployment rates and low occupational profiles of the Vietnamese community. However, it also indicated some positive change in the overall unemployment rate - 25.8%. Although this figure was still three times higher than that for the total Australian population at the time, it was nevertheless the lowest for the Vietnamese community since the mid-1970s. This paper also reported that 74.3% of the Vietnam-born spoke Vietnamese at home. This could be seen as an encouraging sign indicating that the Vietnamese community after more than 20 years in Australia was determined to maintain its language and culture in order to transmit them to future generations. Coughlan concluded the paper by stating that the Vietnamese community was not-homogeneous, but consisted of people with diverse demographic, economic and social characteristics and thus, was better considered as the Vietnamese communities. This view seems to be consistent with other researchers, such as Thomas and Viviani but the author of this study believes that beyond these differences, there are deep rooted cultural values which unite all Vietnamese together as

a very distinctive cohesive cultural identity called the Vietnamese community in Australia.

Coughlan also predicted that as the number of new Vietnamese people migrating to Australia stabilized at about 2,500-3,000 per annum, and with a high proportion of young Vietnamese undertaking university studies, then during the first few decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, more upward economic and social mobility within the Vietnamese community could be expected. The future direction and status of the Vietnamese community was largely dependent on the general economic future of Australia as a whole, as well as on the performance and achievements of its younger and second generation members.

In a summary of this section, it could be said that these two authors have presented an accurate picture of the economic adaptation of the Vietnamese community in Australia over the first 20 years of their settlement using mainly census data and external criteria of measurements through the quantitative methods. However, the adaptation process is very complex and it cannot be measured through economic success only. The success of Vietnamese immigrants in terms of their cultural adaptation is equally important. Thus, in the following section the researcher looks at some studies related to the cultural adaptation of the Vietnamese immigrants in Australia.

### **Studies Related to Cultural Adaptation & Language Maintenance**

Studies conducted on the topic of cultural adaptation including their faith and language maintenance among Vietnamese migrants in the Australian context are relatively rare in the research literature. So far the researcher has found only one book by Mandy Thomas called *"Dreams in The Shadows: Vietnamese-Australian lives in transition"* and three significant post-graduate research studies which address issues of language and culture maintenance as well as educational aspirations and expectations among students of Vietnamese backgrounds in Australian school and university contexts. With regard to religious adaptation, the thesis of Mary Nosedá on the sense of belonging to the Australian Catholic church included a group of Vietnamese respondents. Since these studies are directly relevant to the present investigation, they are discussed in some detail in the following section.

### ***Mandy Thomas' Studies***

Mandy Thomas is an anthropologist who works as a post-doctoral research fellow at the Research Centre in Intercommunal Studies at the University of Western Sydney, Nepean. She has conducted a number of studies and written a few articles on the topics of Vietnam and the Vietnamese in Australia such as *"The Vietnamese in Sydney"* (Thomas, 2001) and the book entitled *"Moving Landscapes: National Parks and the Vietnamese experience"* (Thomas, 2002). Through these works, she explores issues of cultural and economic as well as environmental adaptation of the Vietnamese people, both in Australia and in Vietnam. However, the work most relevant to the present study which the researcher has chosen to discuss in detail here is the book called:

#### ***Dreams in The Shadows: Vietnamese- Australian lives in transition*** (Thomas, 1999)

Through this book, Thomas explored the experiences of Vietnamese living in Australia, with sensitivity, appropriate attitudes, and a fine eye for detail. With great empathy for the Vietnamese people generally and for her interviewees in particular, she was able to gather a rich and reliable set of data in the form of the life stories from a small number (7) of Vietnamese people living in Sydney. Based on concrete realities of these Vietnamese lives, through their daily experiences, she examined displacement and loss, the ongoing effects of the war trauma, and international and community politics on the life of Vietnamese people as individuals and as community members. In this way, she reflects on many of the contemporary debates on identity and community. The main focus of this book is her attempt to explore and define the ethnic identity of the Vietnamese in Australia in relation to their memory of place and space. She discussed how Vietnamese families had adapted to Western domestic architecture to create a more comfortable home environment, how traditional festivals such as Tết Nguyên Đán were used as means to promote the Vietnamese culture, as well as an annual event to create a political voice for the community. She also discussed the changing nature of status and gender relations within the Vietnamese community. She described quite adequately and accurately the way in which Vietnamese–Australians had been treated by the media and the wider community over the years. She also examined the ongoing ties that overseas Vietnamese had with their home land and the importance of this connection to the past in the construction of the Vietnamese identity in Australia at both individual and collective level.

Thomas's (1999) concept of identity is in line with that of Stuart Hall. She argued that identity is "a construction - an enactment" which is "never complete, always in process, and always constituted within and not outside representation" (Hall, 1990: 222). Thus, her work in this book was organised around the notion of an ongoing construction of varying Vietnamese identities, rather than on a timeless, fixed and rigid ethnic category. She tried to uncover the nature of Vietnamese identities by examining the realm of politics, as well as the social, cultural and historical factors at work in their production. She explored the methods through which the state, its policies on immigration and multiculturalism, its institutions and agencies, as well as the media and popular discourses surrounding migrant identities, have all been incorporated into Vietnamese definitions of themselves.

Although this book is a valuable resource, which offers some insight into the realities of Vietnamese immigrants living in Western countries such as Australia, it cannot represent the whole sum of experiences of Vietnamese immigrants in Australia as it was based on the life stories of only a very small number of Vietnamese people living in Sydney, who were originally from the same city of Hanoi in Vietnam. This book is particularly relevant to the current study in its exploration of issues related to the concept of Vietnamese identity and also the debate on multiculturalism and its impact on the Vietnamese settlement in Australia. In terms of method of analysis, it is comparable to the memoir analysis method used in the current study, as the author looked at the interaction between people as a framework for understanding longer term implications and did not rely on statistical analysis to interpret and draw conclusions on very complex issues of adaptation.

### ***Mary Nosedá's Study***

#### ***Belonging: The Case of Immigrants and the Australian Catholic Church***

This is a PhD thesis conducted by Mary Nosedá in 2006 in the School of Arts and Sciences, Faculty of Arts and Sciences of the Australian Catholic University. Mary Nosedá was a religious education teacher in Catholic schools and also worked as a pastoral associate in Catholic parishes in Victoria. The aim of her study was to explore the extent and nature of belonging to the Catholic church in Australia as experienced by immigrants. The immigrants' experience and sense of belonging to the Catholic church was examined by a quantitative method of statistical analysis of the data collected from the 2001 National Life Surveys and the Catholic life Survey of 1996. Both surveys

were conducted with 80,000 Catholics who attended a particular Sunday Mass. Of the 80,000-strong Catholic sample, nearly 24,000 were born in countries other than Australia. Among those who completed the surveys, nearly 3000 respondents completed them in Italian and Vietnamese which enabled Nosedá to make comparisons between Australian-born Catholics and these immigrant respondent groups.

The results of Nosedá's study showed that on almost all measures, immigrants' sense of belonging to the Church was much greater than the Australian-born Catholics. Immigrants attended Sunday Mass in greater proportion than Australian-born Catholics. Immigrants participated more in devotional practices, they had a greater degree of satisfaction with their faith life and they held more orthodox beliefs than Australian-born Catholics. However, immigrants participated less in parish roles compared with Australian-born Catholics. Nosedá argued that language barrier could be one of the reasons but not the only reason which limited participation of immigrants in parish roles. It could be cultural reasons which needed to be explored by further research.

Nosedá's study was relevant to the current study because it included, among the respondents 1,496 Vietnamese-speaking parishioners who completed the surveys and a small group of 32 Vietnamese from one particular parish who engaged in the qualitative research part of her study. It was interesting to note that all these participants had chosen to participate in parish life and that differentiated them from the total cohort of immigrant Catholics. They articulated reasons for their strong sense of belonging to their parish and attributed their participation to their parish priest, but this reason took no consideration of their own commitment to their faith. As refugee immigrants they had survived the difficult journey to come to Australia and they exhibited the same determination to foster their own faith and that of the whole parish community. One of the criticisms of the validity of the survey was that it was not distributed in a way that reflected the distribution of immigrant Catholics throughout the population. Some immigrant groups were not included. The survey was distributed only at mainstream Australian parishes and not at immigrant community Mass centres or at defacto National parishes.

She claimed that belonging to the Catholic Church in Australia was a complex and multi-faceted question to explore. Belonging to the Church meant belonging to a community with shared values and beliefs. It meant belonging to the shared story and history of the Church. Through her literature review, Nosedá also explored the question

of immigrants' identity and the relationship between identity and belonging to the Catholic Church among the respondents. Nosedá argued that identity and belonging are 'two sides of the same coin'; 'identity is about belonging, about what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others'. She claimed that, in the process of migration and settlement, the immigrant's sense of identity was often disrupted or lost, along with all other social and familial relationships that they had established in their own country.

Belonging to the Church was one source of identity that the Catholic immigrant brought with him or her when migrating to another country such as Australia. Thus, belonging to a faith tradition, such as the Catholic faith, was very important for many Catholic immigrants, especially the Vietnamese, as it provided an important aspect of their individual identity. However, Nosedá argued that negotiating the continuance of their Catholic cultural identity within the Australian Catholic church was a very difficult task for the immigrants. The Australian Church could be regarded as a reluctant host in wanting immigrants to 'fit in', as demonstrated by its deliberate policy of not founding any ethnic parishes (parishes that would accommodate the immigrants' culture as well as their religion).

In the early to mid-1970s the Australian cultural attitude to immigrants changed considerably with the introduction of the Federal Government's policy on multiculturalism. As immigrant communities and the general public began to absorb the spirit and practice of acceptance and tolerance of diversity, Catholic communities could not remain unaffected by the societal influence. The Church underwent the changes of the Second Vatican Council and grew to understand itself to be on a spiritual journey analogous to the physical one of the immigrants.

The final conclusion of Nosedá's study stated that "since the Second World War, Catholic immigrants have done the work of belonging to the Australian Catholic Church. They have done this despite the 'benign neglect' of the Church itself and they represent the Church's 'most Catholic' members". In short, Nosedá's research suggested that immigrant Catholics were the most faithful of all Catholics in local parishes at the time of her research. This was also clearly evident among the Vietnamese respondents Nosedá interviewed.



### **Peter Ninnes' Study**

One of the most significant studies conducted in South Australia, on the subject of cultural adaptation, with emphasis on Vietnamese language and culture maintenance in Australia is Peter Ninnes' research study entitled *The Cultural Adaptation of Students of Vietnamese Ethnic Background*. (Ninnes, 1995). Ninnes' research focused on a group of 201 students of Vietnamese background who were studying year 11 in 28 different State and Catholic high schools in Adelaide at the time. Most were recent arrivals and some were born in Australia. Ninnes' research used Kim and Hurb's (1993) theory of cultural adaptation as an overarching framework for the examination of cultural change among the students. Ninnes examined the nature of and variations in students' values and identified the factors influencing changes in values. He also examined the students' attitudes to school and their educational and occupational aspirations. Finally, he explored some other aspects of cultural retention, namely students' attitudes to Vietnamese cultural preservation in Australia, and the manifestation of these attitudes in terms of the students' use of Vietnamese language, and their participation in activities organised by Vietnamese ethnic organisations.

The major findings of Ninnes' (1995) study revealed that those students who placed greatest importance on the Vietnamese cultural values, such as filial piety, also placed importance on certain individualistic and universalistic values. Ninnes (1995) found that the most recently arrived students within his data sample, placed greater emphasis on values which Vietnamese writers considered as being traditionally Vietnamese. These students were labelled as Conservers, and in Kim and Hurb's (1993)<sup>1</sup> terminology were practising an attachment type of adaptation. On the other hand, those students who had arrived in Australia at a young age and lived in Australia for a longer time gave greater importance to hedonistic and self-direction values. Ninnes claimed that this group of students had a value system more like that of the general school population in Adelaide at the time than that of recently arrived students. They were labelled as Enhancers because they differed from other groups in the emphasis, they gave to self-enhancement values. In Kim and Hurb's theory, these students were practicing a replacement form of adaptation. Two other groups in Ninnes' data sample (1995) were identified on the basis of values. Both of these groups were intermediate to the Conservers and Enhancers in terms of years of residence and age on arrival. They were labelled High Transcenders and Low Transcenders, as both groups placed importance

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on Transcendence values but the High Transcenders placed greater emphasis on these values than the Low Transcenders. Ninnes pointed out that according to Kim and Hurh's theory, both of these groups appeared to practise an addition type of adaptation. Ninnes also found that students in both of these groups rated the value pertaining to filial piety as of greatest importance but they both also placed importance on self-direction values.

Students in Ninnes' study (1995) showed positive attitudes to school overall but the most positive attitudes were found amongst short-term residents and those who exhibited an attachment mode of adaptation. whereas long-term residents and those who exhibited a replacement mode of adaptation, had the least positive attitudes to school. This finding is consistent with previous research findings and in particular it confirmed the result of the researcher's (Tran thi Nien 1993:49-56) previous research conducted with a small number of tertiary students. Ninnes' study (1995) revealed that, in general, students' aspirations and expectations were high, although they perceived that their parents' aspirations for them were even higher, particularly with regard to occupational aspirations. There was evidence that the discrepancies between student and parental aspirations caused tension within families. Ninnes' study (1995) revealed that high educational aspirations and expectations were linked closely to each other and also to an emphasis on Enhancement values, positive attitudes to school, good study habits, and English language competence. In terms of Kim and Hurh's (1993) theory of adaptation, it would appear that attachment and addition forms of adaptations were conducive to high educational aspirations and expectations.

With regard to Vietnamese language and culture maintenance, Ninnes' research found that language use was greatest in the home, at religious ceremonies and in conversation with parents and grandparents. In these contexts, most students were exhibiting an attachment form of adaptation. For some students, this was out of necessity because their parents or grandparents did not speak English at all. It was also found that language use with siblings and friends of the same age and background showed adaptive modes ranging from blending to replacement. Language shift was greatest among students who had lived in Australia for a long time and who had arrived in Australia at a young age. This finding is also consistent with that of the researcher's previous research (Tran thi Nien, 1993: 57-71). Language shift was greater among students who had no religious affiliation, those who identified themselves as Australian rather than those as Vietnamese or Vietnamese-Australian, those who had a negative attitude towards

Vietnamese cultural preservation, and rarely participated in Vietnamese cultural activities. With regard to students' attitudes concerning the preservation of Vietnamese culture, Ninnes' study (1995) found that most students were employing an attachment form of adaptation but there was a greater variety of adaptive modes in terms of intentions and actual participation in Vietnamese cultural activities. Loss of connection to Vietnamese community was most obvious among students in the Enhancers group, those who were long-term residents, those who arrived at a young age and those who had no religious affiliation.

Ninnes' (1995) study provided important insights into issues related to cultural adaptation of Vietnamese young people in an English-speaking country like Australia. Ninnes' (1995) examination of issues related to Vietnamese language and culture maintenance were of great assistance to the current study which could be considered as a further and deeper exploration of the same issues using a different conceptual framework and methodology. However, Ninnes' (1995) study does present some limitations. Firstly, his data sample is limited to only one group of students namely year 11, who were doing SACE in South Australian schools at the time. Although this data sample represented 89% of the total year 11 students of Vietnamese background population at the time, their views did not necessarily reflect those of other year levels or other age groups. Secondly, Ninnes (1995) asked students to assess their parents' attitudes and aspirations, then matched students' educational and occupational aspirations and expectations with their parents' instead of surveying or interviewing parents directly.

Finally, for examining students' value priorities, Ninnes used the general questionnaire developed by Schwartz (1992), instead of using a survey instrument which had a particular focus on Vietnamese values, such as that used by Caplan et al (1991) to conduct a similar study in the United States. This questionnaire existed both in English and Vietnamese. The terminology used in Schwartz's questionnaire was very sophisticated and used highly abstract concepts which were not familiar to the Vietnamese students. The Vietnamese translation version of the questionnaire appeared even more complicated. Thus, the researcher has some reservations regarding the appropriateness of such a questionnaire for Year 11 students of Vietnamese background, whose knowledge of both English and Vietnamese was limited because of their migration experience, particularly given that the average age on arrival of the students

in Ninnes' sample was 10.2 years and their average period of residence in Australia was only seven years.

### **Two other Studies**

Apart from Ninnes' (1995) study, two other studies were conducted in the 1990's on issues of language and culture maintenance. Both of these studies were master degree dissertations and of a smaller scale. The first of these two studies was conducted by Trần thị Niên, the researcher of the current study, entitled *Maintenance of Vietnamese Language and Culture in Australia Among Vietnamese-Australian Students in 1993*. Trần thị Niên's study (1993) examined attitudes and tendencies toward Vietnamese language and culture maintenance among a small group of twelve university students, using the humanistic sociological theory and methodology of Znaniecki, (1969) and Smolicz (1979, 1999). It also explored the students' schooling experiences in Australia and the influence of the Vietnamese extended family system on students' academic, social and cultural life in Australia.

The overall findings of this study revealed that student participants had very positive attitudes towards the maintenance of Vietnamese language in Australia. Their Vietnamese language usage was very strong in the home, as well as in religious and community settings. Almost all of them used Vietnamese exclusively when they talked to their parents, grandparents, elderly Vietnamese-Australians and their friends of Vietnamese background. However, language shift and weakening of Vietnamese cultural activities was already occurring among those who came to Australia at an early age and who were long term residents in Australia. This finding was clearly confirmed again through Ninnes' study (1995). Respondents in Trần thị Niên's (1993) study also placed great importance on the retention of Vietnamese family relationships and traditions as well as Vietnamese cultural activities and practices such as the celebration of Vietnamese festivals and important religious celebrations. Trần thị Niên's (1993) study was significant as it was the first to explore issues of Vietnamese language and culture maintenance of students in South Australia formed an important foundation for the current research which is based on the same theoretical framework. However, it should be pointed out that the scope of the study was very small and selective. The views expressed by students in this study cannot be seen as representative of the general student population of Vietnamese background at the time since almost all of them had studied Vietnamese for a number of years in high school then continued at university. It

could be expected that such a group of participants would naturally have positive attitudes and tendency towards the maintenance of Vietnamese language and culture.

The second systematic study on the same issues of language maintenance was conducted by Phạm Như Mai in 1994. Phạm's (1994) study examined attitudes to Vietnamese language and language use among 81 Vietnamese adults and 84 year 12 and university students in Melbourne. Phạm's (1994) study revealed that the majority of students were less likely to use Vietnamese when speaking to their siblings than when speaking to their parents and grandparents and other Vietnamese relatives. Similarly, many adults in Phạm's (1994) study reported that they used Vietnamese less with their children than with their own parents or with Vietnamese people of their own generation. This pattern of language use is consistent with that found in Trần thị Niên's study (1993) and Ninnes' study (1995).

With regard to language use domains, Pham's study (1994) found that students were more likely to use Vietnamese outside the classroom than inside and that nearly half of the students in the sample said that they used only English or mainly English at social events and less than one-third said that they used mainly Vietnamese. It should be noted that Pham's (1994) survey instrument did not specify whether the social event in question was organised and attended by mainly Vietnamese speaking people or by English speaking groups; this factor would certainly influence the language use patterns of the respondents. Despite its limitations, Pham's study (1994) has provided some important insights into Vietnamese language maintenance in Australia relevant to the current research.

### **Selected Studies of Vietnamese Immigrants in France**

France has a very long history of connections with Vietnam. In fact, French presence in Vietnam dates back to as early as the seventeenth century. The first group of French missionaries, headed by Alexandre De Rhodes, established a Catholic mission in the north of Vietnam in 1627 but Alexandre De Rhodes and other European missionaries had already been in the south of Vietnam since 1624 (Dương Quảng Hàm, 1968: 190). The French were defeated by the Japanese and consequently forced to withdraw from Indochina in 1945, but French political involvement in Vietnam finally ended with the Geneva Agreement in 1954 after the French army was defeated by the Việt Minh at Điện Biên Phủ battle. Thus, the impact of French influence in Vietnam had been

profound, especially during the French colonial administration period which lasted more than 100 years, from the second half of the nineteenth century until 1954. As a consequence of this political connection between the two countries, the first group of Vietnamese people who came to France consisted of Vietnamese men, recruited as soldiers in the French army during the First World War. Many of these soldiers did not return to Vietnam after the war but stayed on in France. Thus, they formed the first group of Vietnamese in France, followed by those who came between the two world wars, then those who arrived during the Second World War and finally those who came as refugees after the fall of Saigon in 1975. All of these groups and their offspring constituted a population of more than 250,000 people in France at the time of this study, yet it was hardly possible to find books or published research materials specifically documenting their lives or their settlement experiences.

The researcher found only a few publications on the topic of settlement of Vietnamese in France namely *La Diaspora Vietnamien en France, un cas particulier: Paris et la region Parisienne*, an article by Lâm Thanh Liêm and Jean Mais published in the supplement EDA no 207. The only major research (published as a book) which deals extensively with issues of social and cultural adaptation, integration and the question of identity concerning Vietnamese migrants in France is *Les Vietnamiens en France, Insertion et Identité* by Lê Hữu Khoa (1985). A second book, which has two chapters directly relevant to the current study, is entitled *La Famille, Secret de l'Intégration, Enquête sur la France Immigrée* by Christian Jelen (1993). Both of these books are discussed in detail in the following section of this chapter.

### **La Famille, Secret de l'Intégration by Christian Jelen**

This book was based on Christian Jelen's research on the influence of the family on the integration process of immigrants in France focussing on four groups, namely the Chinese, the Vietnamese, the Africans and the Maghrebins. According to Jelen (1993), the family holds the secret to successful integration of the Vietnamese into French society. He argued that the family, especially the parents, played a vital role in the integration process of their children into French society. Jelen's 1993 research showed that the Vietnamese and the Chinese had successfully integrated into the French society because they had a strong family system, based on Confucian values and traditions. Jelen (1993) claimed that second generation Vietnamese and Chinese were more successful in their academic achievements compared with those from African and Maghrebin origins because Asian parents valued education highly; they were willing to

sacrifice everything for their children's education. Jelen (1993) also argued that by having inherited the Confucian family values, Vietnamese parents promoted hard work, determination and a strong sense of self-sufficiency among their children and these guiding principles had helped second generation Vietnamese to succeed academically, socially and professionally in the new society. Jelen (1993) claimed that Vietnamese parents were able to control their children's behaviour and to guide them to become integrated into French society more quickly than those from African and Maghrebin backgrounds, thanks to their family traditions which promoted respect, solidarity, and mutual support among members of the family.

Jelen (1993) also argued that the long colonial history of Vietnam had helped the Vietnamese people to acquire a strong sense of independence and adaptability wherever they are. After a long period of one thousand years of Chinese domination, then one hundred years of French domination, Vietnam stood firm as a strong independent nation. The Vietnamese people refused to be assimilated either into French or the Chinese culture. They kept their unique characteristics, their language and culture. They had the capacity to choose what was best in the ruling culture to integrate it into their own. By nature, the Vietnamese were strong but flexible. They knew how to adapt quickly to a new environment, without losing their own identity and the uniqueness of their culture. These were the key factors which had contributed to the success of the Vietnamese integration into French society, according to Jelen (1993).

***Family Conflicts:*** While recognizing that family has greatly contributed to the successful integration of second generation Vietnamese in France, Jelen (1993: 163-185) pointed out that the same set of family values and traditions had caused friction and conflict between parents and young members of many Vietnamese families in France. There was evidence that most young Vietnamese in France would embrace Western family values entirely, while others would try to find a balance between the two opposing family structures and values. Young Vietnamese women found some of the basic Confucian principles regarding their roles in the family unacceptable and unjust. Through several stories of young people that he interviewed, Jelen (1993) demonstrated that there were strong indicators that the Vietnamese traditional family structure was under threat in a modern Western society like France where individualistic values were regarded more relevant than collective values. Jelen (1993) predicted that the future of the Vietnamese language and Vietnamese culture in France would not be

secured as mixed marriages become more and more a reality for second and future generations of Vietnamese in France.

### **Les Vietnamiens en France, Insertion et Identité by Lê Hữu Khoa**

This book deals extensively with issues of social and cultural adaptation, integration and the question of identity concerning Vietnamese migrants in France. It was published in 1985, 67 years after the first group of Vietnamese soldiers arrived in France but only ten years after the first group of Vietnamese refugees arrived in France in 1975. Thus, it is not a recent book and the focus of this book is not exclusively on the group of Vietnamese who came to France as refugees following the fall of Saigon 1975 like those who settled in Australia but all groups of Vietnamese who came to settle in France at different periods of time since the First World War. The book explored the questions of adaptation and identity of a diverse Vietnamese population in France, a population which was difficult to define and impossible to identify statistically for all sorts of reasons such as politics and ideology. These differences have divided the Vietnamese community in France for many decades in the past, and are likely to continue to do so in the future.

#### **Settlement experiences of Vietnamese immigrants in France in different periods**

In this book, Lê Hữu Khoa classified the Vietnamese population in France into five different categories based on their arrival date. The first five chapters of the book discussed the characteristics of each group and their struggles with the question of identity as they settled into the French society.

#### ***The Vietnamese who arrived in France before 1945***

This group discussed in chapter one consisted of three main waves of Vietnamese people who came to France

- during the First World War 1914-18
- between the two World Wars
- during the second World War

They were mainly Vietnamese men recruited as volunteers or by force to fight with the French army or to work in the artillery factories in France. Vietnam was a French colony during this period. Thus, it was the duty of the Vietnamese to serve and to defend France. After the war, many of these men chose to stay in France because returning to Vietnam at the time would mean going back to live in absolute poverty.



Among this first group of Vietnamese, there were also students from rich families who were studying in France at the time because France was then considered as a land filled with intellectual, cultural and political opportunities and aspirations for young Vietnamese. Nguyễn Ái Quốc (Hồ Chí Minh) was one of those students. He was studying in France from 1926-1927. It was during this time in France that Nguyễn Ái Quốc learned about Marxism and then formed his first communist party with the support of the Vietnamese workers in France. The young Vietnamese at the time were inspired by the idea of going to study in France, then returned to transform the Vietnamese society and to fight for its independence.

The Vietnamese community in France during this period was relatively small but very active and divided politically. A very strong solidarity movement was established among the Vietnamese soldiers and workers in France at the time and the Vietnamese communists knew how to use this opportunity to achieve their political aims. There was constant tension between those who wanted French protection and privileges and those who wanted to free Vietnam from French colonial power. It was indeed a volatile and growing community with a very strong collective identity formed around their concerns and loyalty to Vietnam. The attitudes of most people towards their adaptation into the French society were temporary during this period as their only wish was to help to free Vietnam so that they could return to their own country one day.

### ***The Vietnamese who arrived in France after 1954 and before 1975***

Chapter 2 discusses the characteristics of the Vietnamese who arrived in France after 1954 and before 1975. This group consisted mainly of students who studied in France during the period and those of French nationality who had married a French partner in Vietnam and decided to join their partner in France. The biggest group arrived in France after the Điện Biên Phủ battle in 1954 when the French army was defeated by the Việt Cộng (Vietnamese Communists). Consequently, France had to abandon Indochina and withdrew its troops from Vietnam completely. The Vietnamese community in France at the time was characterized by two main aspects: firstly, the political division among its members was more intense than ever before. The division of Vietnam into North and South following the Geneva Agreement in 1954 practically divided the Vietnamese community in France into two fractions: anti-communists and pro-communists. Secondly, the economic adaptation of the community was showing clear signs of success. Restaurant business was the most common occupation for those

who could afford it financially. Information and Technology was another popular field of work that many educated Vietnamese in France were engaged in. Vietnamese entered this profession because it was a relatively new area and had lots of opportunities for development. Vietnamese students chose this field of study because it was easier for them to succeed.

### ***The Vietnamese who arrived in France after 1975: The Refugees***

Chapter 3 considers the Vietnamese refugees who came after the fall of Saigon on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 1975 when the communists took over the whole country of Vietnam. This situation caused an exodus of more than a million refugees from Vietnam; France joined other countries such as USA, Canada and Australia in accepting quite a big number of Vietnamese refugees. According to a Catholic Mission magazine (*Mục Vụ Di Dân và Tị Nạn*), (Mai Đức Vinh, 1996: 45-6) there were approximately 46,500 persons who arrived in France from 1975-1994. These people were selected by French authorities based on the following criteria:

1. Knowledge of French language and culture
2. Family in France
3. Served in the Administration or French army during the colonial period.

Lê Hữu Khoa reported that once the Vietnamese refugees arrived in France they were sent to remote provincial towns with the hope that they would be inserted or rather assimilated into French society more quickly, but this policy of dispersion in order to avoid ghetto concentration of Vietnamese proved to be a total failure on the part of the government. Because of the lack of language and professional qualifications, the majority of Vietnamese refugees could not find work, and were unable to adapt into the new society. They lived in complete social and psychological isolation. The elderly group was most affected by this traumatic situation. Consequently, many Vietnamese families decided to move to Paris to be near other Vietnamese people and be able to participate in the Vietnamese community activities (social, political or religious). This residential movement resulted in different kinds of difficulties, such as housing and other social problems for certain regions of Paris (e.g., the V and XIII arrondissements) where there were high concentrations of Vietnamese. There was a complete social, cultural and structural change in the life of the Vietnamese community in Paris at the time. The mass settlement of Vietnamese refugees in the Paris region totally transformed the lifestyle and relationships of the Vietnamese who had arrived before 1975.

According to Lê Hữu Khoa, adaptation into French society for those who came as Vietnamese refugees after April 1975 was much more difficult than for those who had arrived before that time. Settlement experiences were quite traumatic for many Vietnamese refugees in France. Their departure from Vietnam was not planned and they had not been prepared culturally, linguistically, professionally and psychologically to live in France, like those who had arrived before 1975 as a matter of choice. Not only were they less successful in their integration into the French society socially and professionally, but their children's academic achievements were also at a lower level compared with the children of those Vietnamese who had arrived before 1975. It was so bad that some Vietnamese asked the government to allow them to return to Vietnam and many left France to go to USA as a consequence.

### ***The Vietnamese of Second Generation in France***

Lê Hữu Khoa devotes chapter 4 to a discussion of the younger generation of the Vietnamese. He defined second generation Vietnamese as those born in France of Vietnamese parents or those who had arrived in France at a very young age. He pointed out that for the second generation Vietnamese in France the main problems derived from the fact that these people were caught in the dilemma of living in two different cultures. In the family they were raised and expected to behave like Vietnamese in the most traditional sense, as their parents often held on to the most traditional forms of the Vietnamese culture, but at school and in society generally they were taught to behave and to live like French people. Consequently, they often found themselves in culturally conflicting situations which were very difficult to resolve. French society, according to Lê Hữu Khoa, was only pretending to be pluralistic and certainly its education system, did not consider the cultural and linguistic needs of second generation Vietnamese as it did for Arab or British migrants, for the simple reason that the Vietnamese group was not big enough to be noticed by the government. A sense of split personality and constant living in the margins of community and society were common experiences for second generation Vietnamese in France because when among the Vietnamese they did not feel Vietnamese but with the French, they did not feel accepted by the French either. Lê Hữu Khoa claimed that in order to overcome this identity crisis, they tried to create for themselves a new identity, a new culture which was a mixture of French and Vietnamese culture. This search for a new identity described by Lê Hữu Khoa, was not unique in France. It seems to have happened to second generation Vietnamese in other countries such as USA, Canada and recently in Australia as well.

***The Eurasian Franco-Vietnamese: Those born from mixed marriages***

This group which consisted of those born from mixed marriages between a Vietnamese and a French person in Vietnam or in France was discussed in chapter 5 of Lê Hữu Khoa's book. The majority of those participating in this study had been born in Vietnam during the colonial period usually from a French father and a Vietnamese mother. Many of them were repatriated in 1954 and the rest returned to France in 1975. In this study, the author did not take into account the Franco-Vietnamese born in France. One could guess that for this subgroup many issues related to their lives in France would be different again from those of the Eurasians born in Vietnam. Through this study, Lê Hữu Khoa found that for the Eurasians born in Vietnam, those who returned to France in 1954 seemed to have less difficulties in inserting themselves in the French society than those who repatriated in 1975 because the relationship between France and Vietnam in 1954 was better than in 1975. Lê Hữu Khoa pointed out that almost all the Eurasians spoke French, had lived in the French culture all their lives in Vietnam and, with their French nationality acquired under the colonial rules, they had protection and rights like any other French citizen. Thus, on the surface, the Eurasians seemed to have everything they needed for a quick and easy adaptation into French society when they arrived in France.

However, the reality of the situation was very different. Their transition into a new life in France proved to be even more complex than other categories of Vietnamese. They found themselves at a loss on many fronts: professionally this group had had lots of privileges in Vietnam. They had been masters and bosses who worked for the colony, but in France they became employees, sometimes working in humble manual jobs like other Vietnamese refugees. Their professional status was completely turned upside down; and many of them considered this downward mobility shameful. In Vietnam the Eurasians considered themselves superior because they belonged to the French dominant culture, the culture of the colonizer, whereas the rest of the Vietnamese population belonged to the Vietnamese culture, the culture of the colonized. They formed an elite middle class in the colonial society in Vietnam but when they arrived in France they felt that they belonged neither to French culture nor to the Vietnamese culture. Nobody recognised their status or their identity. They were treated like other Vietnamese migrants. Unlike other Vietnamese migrants who tried to adapt themselves to the French wider community, the Franco-Vietnamese did not want to do that. Thus, they were at the crossroads and often found themselves in difficult situations. They had

very little support from the French government and they were not big enough as a group to have an effective voice or to create a community network among themselves to support each other as other groups of Vietnamese in France had done.

Lê Hữu Khoa also pointed out that among the Eurasians born in Vietnam, the most disadvantaged ones were those born illegitimately from casual relationships between Vietnamese women and French soldiers. These children suffered a different fate both in Vietnam and in France. In Vietnam they were not recognised by the law or by their fathers. They were victims of social prejudice and discrimination as in Vietnam at the time there were strong social stigma and negative attitudes towards illegitimate children, especially those of mixed blood. These children often ended up living in orphanages because nobody wanted them. They grew up with no family, not much education, without a real identity. Their future in Vietnam was very bleak but when arrived in France, they found themselves totally alienated from the Vietnamese community as well as the French wider community. There was no real place for them anywhere in the host society.

### **Personal identity and adaptation**

In the second section of the book, consisting of four chapters, Lê Hữu Khoa used four types of questionnaires (open ended, semi-open ended, multiple choice and closed questions) to examine the question of identity and the adaptation as seen and lived by the subjects themselves. He also explored the connection between identity and the adaptation process in this section of the book. Data used for this particular section came from responses to questionnaires of 250 participants chosen by the author (50 from each of 5 categories of the Vietnamese population in France as described previously). The questionnaires were designed to examine the respondents' experiences and opinions against the author's hypothesis on the questions being examined. Analysis of the data showed that the Vietnamese groups who settled in France before 1975 seemed to adapt into the French society professionally, culturally, and socially much better than those who came as refugees after 1975.

The results also showed that, apart from the Eurasian Franco-Vietnamese, all groups of Vietnamese had a strong desire to keep their Vietnamese cultural identity and a very high sense of loyalty to their own country of Vietnam, whether they were pro-communists or anti-communists. Lê Hữu Khoa concluded that patriotism appeared to

be a national characteristic of Vietnamese people. It is interesting to note that 50% of the respondents saw themselves as possessing double cultures (French and Vietnamese), including many who were second generation Vietnamese. The results indicated that those who settled in France between 1945 and 1975 (the majority of them were students) were the most successful in their socio-professional and cultural integration into the French society. They were also most successful in maintaining their Vietnamese cultural identity. Thus, according to this author, there was indeed a close connection between identity and the adaptation process for the Vietnamese people in France. The question of identity seemed to be more ambiguous for the Eurasian Franco-Vietnamese. This group did not see themselves as having a clearly recognised personal identity in France. They felt neither French nor Vietnamese, but wanted to create their own culture and their own identity as Franco-Vietnamese. Evidence showed that this group still had a long way to go before they could find a place, a defined personal or group identity for themselves in French society.

### **Collective identity and strategies of adaptation**

In the third and final section of the book, Lê Hữu Khoa devoted another three chapters to explore the question of identity and adaptation of the Vietnamese in France as presented and constructed by other agents. In this instance, he studied the dynamics of the Vietnamese community collective identity and its adaptation strategies as they evolved at different times under the influence of the Vietnamese Embassy and the Vietnamese Associations in France. The methods and documents used for this section were derived from the author's observations and his interpretation of archival documents, as well as other materials such as Vietnamese newspapers and public speeches and talks given by community leaders in France or in Vietnam.

Results of Lê Hữu Khoa's (1985) research showed that the image of a unified Vietnamese collective identity in France was far from reality. His interpretation was that Vietnamese people in France often adopted pragmatic approaches and flexible attitudes to cope with changes in their lives because they were culturally equipped to do so. He pointed to two main characteristics which he considered to be deeply rooted in people's thoughts, and which strongly influenced their behaviours. These were *giữ thể diện*: *not to lose face* and *kiên trì*: *determination and patience*. Other popular sayings expressed in the Vietnamese proverbs, such as *ở bầu thì tròn, ở ống thì dài* [*in a round*

*jar it must be round, in a long tube it must be long] or nhập gia tùy tục [when entering someone else's house, one must follow its rules]* helped to explain the flexible attitudes of the Vietnamese in the adaptation process in France.

When closely examining the influence of the Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in France on the adaptation process and the formation of a collective identity of the Vietnamese community in France, Lê Hữu Khoa (1985) found that the influence of the Embassy on the integration of Vietnamese people in France was relatively modest, especially with regards to Vietnamese refugees. These people had escaped from Vietnam to flee Communism, therefore when they arrived in France, they did not want to have anything to do with an Embassy which represented the communist government of Vietnam.

On the other hand, the Embassy tried to promote a Vietnamese community image, a collective identity closely linked to Vietnam. In order to do this effectively, it had to exploit the people's sense of loyalty to Vietnam under the slogan: unite with each other to rebuild a prosperous Vietnam for the future, after the ravage of the American war. The effect of such slogans soon wore out when people realized that the pictures of Vietnam and the Vietnamese communist government, painted by the Embassy, were completely different from the reality. When Vietnamese people in France heard terrible stories told by the refugee group or later on had the opportunity to return to Vietnam to see with their own eyes the degree to which poverty, corruption, violation of human rights and a lack of freedom controlled the lives of people in Vietnam, they were greatly disillusioned. Thus, the credibility of the Embassy was in a serious crisis.

However, the Embassy tried to exercise some strict political control over the Vietnamese people in France in the first decade following the fall of Saigon in April 1975 by controlling the periodic and permanent returns of Vietnamese people to Vietnam. A number of Vietnamese who had studied in France in 1975 were refused permission to return to Vietnam permanently or just for visiting. This situation has completely changed in recent years. The Embassy and the Government of Vietnam now actively encourage Vietnamese people overseas, the "Việt kiều", to return to Vietnam for short or long term visits because the government has realized that Việt kiều returns have brought great economic benefit to Vietnam and its people. The question of double

nationality has been successfully resolved for the many Vietnamese who wanted to belong to both countries (France and Vietnam). In Lê Hữu Khoa's view, the Vietnamese government through its embassy had not been able to control the Vietnamese community or to impose on the Vietnamese people a unified process of integration into the French society.

With regards to the influence of Vietnamese associations on the question of identity and the process of adaptation of Vietnamese people in France, Lê Hữu Khoa (1985) discovered the existence of four main categories of Associations in France, namely anti-communist associations, pro-governmental associations, Buddhist associations and Catholic associations. Depending on their philosophy or their political or religious ideology, each type of association adopted different kinds of strategies to achieve their aims but they all had some positive influence in the adaptation process, as well as on the formation and changes in the collective identity of the Vietnamese community in France at different times. According to Lê Hữu Khoa, Buddhist associations appeared to be successful in promoting their own religious agenda by associating Buddhism with the Vietnamese culture. Lê Hữu Khoa (1985) claimed that the Catholic associations' main aim was to help people to integrate themselves fully and permanently into French society without much concern about maintaining their Vietnamese cultural identity, whereas the Buddhist associations strongly supported their members keeping up the Vietnamese culture and most of all creating a collective Vietnamese identity in France through their Buddhist religious identity. Finally, Lê Hữu Khoa considered that the evidence showed that it was not possible to talk of one Vietnamese community in France, but rather a number of Vietnamese communities and various Vietnamese collective identities. Lê Hữu Khoa also found that solidarity and unity among the Vietnamese in France manifested itself most clearly in the political field. They were always ready and willing to work together to fight against communism or to fight for the independence of Vietnam, for example, but when it came to economic co-operation, Vietnamese people were different from the Chinese who were always ready to help one other with capital and knowledge so that they could all be successful in their commercial ventures. Vietnamese people preferred to work separately, each family in their own small shop. Thus, the Vietnamese community as a whole was not as successful as the Chinese community in the commercial and economic field in France.



In concluding the review of Lê Hữu Khoa's 1985 book, the author of the current study would like to make the following observations.

- This book is a very valuable and interesting sociological research study in both content and methodology. Although it is not a recent publication, this book is still the only reliable and relatively well documented research which gives the readers good insights into many complex issues around the question of adaptation and identity of the diverse Vietnamese population in France.
- In terms of content, the author of the current research sees herself in agreement with most of the findings and the lines of arguments that Lê Hữu Khoa (1985) put forward in this study. The author of the current research would agree with Lê Hữu Khoa's concept and definition of identity as something not static or fixed but a constantly changing entity. However, she was hoping to find out perhaps at the end of the book what elements really constituted the Vietnamese collective identity in France but this question was not addressed at all. In the attempt to establish the Vietnamese identity at personal and collective level Lê Hữu Khoa asked the question "who am I" but did not provide the complementary question, "What makes a person Vietnamese?" or "What constitutes a Vietnamese?" In fact, Lê Hữu Khoa (1985) acknowledged this gap but it was too late by the time he realized it.
- The findings related to the adaptation process, as well as the dialectic between adaptation and identity, appeared to be consistent with the logical thinking, personal experience and general observations of the author of the current study who happens to be Vietnamese herself, but sometimes they seemed to lack detailed analysis based on sufficient data. However, because the scope of Lê Hữu Khoa's (1985) study was so large, it was impossible for him to collect sufficient data in order to examine each aspect of the adaptation question at a deeper level. He was trying to investigate all aspects of adaptation (social, professional, cultural, economic...) of a very large and diverse population over a very long span of time (first world war to 1985) with only a small sample of 50 participants in each of the five categories of the Vietnamese population in France. Lê Hữu Khoa did recognise the lack of the data in this study, especially data related to the second generation Vietnamese category. In particular, the evidence presented in this book to back Lê Hữu Khoa's (1985) claim that the Catholic associations main concern was to promote full and permanent integration of their members into the French society, implying that these

associations might prefer total assimilation into the French Catholic culture at the risk of its members losing their Vietnamese cultural identity, was far from convincing. This issue was examined carefully in the current research to see what the present situation was among the Vietnamese Catholic associations.

- In terms of the methodology applied by Lê Hữu Khoa in this study, the author of the current research found it most interesting and informative. Lê Hữu Khoa combined quantitative and qualitative methods of sociological research well. He used data collected from interviews, questionnaires, historical documents, newspapers, speeches, as well as his own observations. Being Vietnamese born, with knowledge and experience in the Vietnamese culture Lê Hữu Khoa had an added advantage to bring to this study. However, in this researcher's judgment, Lê Hữu Khoa (1985) did not adequately address the question of Vietnamese language and culture maintenance and its influence on the integration process.

## ***Conclusion***

In concluding this literature review chapter, the author of the current study would like to point out that although the materials reviewed in the second part of this chapter did not examine the cultural adaptation question exclusively, they provided many insights and a great deal of knowledge which proved to be most helpful in the analysis of the data presented in the coming chapters.

So far books, articles and research studies directly related to the question of Vietnamese language and culture maintenance in the host countries such as France, USA or Canada almost do not exist. In Australia the situation is slightly different but not much better. Thus, the present study could become a valuable resource as it is the first research study of a relatively large scale, trying to explore the question of cultural and linguistic adaptation of Vietnamese migrants exclusively.

## **SECTION II: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK, METHODOLOGY AND DETAILS OF RESPONDENTS**

## **Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework and Methods of Research**

### ***Introduction***

This thesis is based on the conceptual framework and methodology of humanistic sociology which originated with the Polish American sociologist, Florian Znaniecki, and was further developed by Smolicz for his research on different ethnic cultural groups in Australia (Smolicz,1979; Znaniecki,1968). However, where it is appropriate, other theories of cultural adaptation and language maintenance described in Chapter 2 have been utilised in the interpretation of data, in conjunction with Smolicz's theory. The essence of Smolicz's theory on cultural adaptation can be found in a number of his writings, and more fully, in his book entitled *Culture and Education in a Plural Society*, published in 1979 by the Curriculum Development Centre, Canberra. The aim of this chapter is to outline the relevant aspects of the theory in its application to the present study.

This chapter consists of two main parts. The first part is devoted to a presentation of the theoretical framework of humanistic sociology and its methodological implications. The second part is a discussion of the methods of gathering data used by the researcher and an overview of the participants who provided the main source of information for this study.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

In the following section the researcher discusses the basic concepts and assumptions of humanistic sociological theory and its application to the present investigation.

#### **Basic Concepts and Assumptions**

Humanistic sociological theory rests on two basic assumptions: firstly, that meaning is the essence of culture and secondly, that all cultural data must be taken with the humanistic coefficient.

***Meaning as the essence of culture.*** A humanistic sociologist is concerned not with natural objects which only have "content" but with cultural objects or values which also have "meaning" in addition to content, that is, the meaning which is attributed to them

by human beings (Smolicz, 1979: 22). The cultural value of the Bronze Drum for the Vietnamese people, for instance, does not reside in its structure and shape or its material content but in the cultural and mythological meaning bestowed on it in the past and present by conscious human agents. Again, snow in Vietnam, for example, has no cultural value since it has had no place in what Geertz (1973: 5) refers to as the “webs of significance” spun by people in that society. Thus, the concern of the humanistic sociologist is not the reality that is external to individuals but their sense of its significance. It is this *significance* that, according to the principles of humanistic sociology, the social scientist must capture. This theory argues that cultural values or meanings are *shared values* for a given group, experienced not only by each individual but by all other individuals who are active members of the group. The complex of shared meanings, thoughts and actions which constitute the totality of cultural life may therefore be understood in terms of *systems of cultural values*. In Smolicz’s words “human actions and their material and ideational products have become patterned and organized over generations into group systems (of values) covering all the various domains of cultures” (Smolicz, 1979: 26). These basic data of the group’s social and cultural life can be regarded as having an objectivity of their own which lends itself to sociological scrutiny.

***The humanistic coefficient in the interpretation of cultural data.*** Parallel to the first assumption is that cultural systems of values are products of the consciousness of individuals as active agents within society. Their actions, feelings, attitudes, and viewpoints become meaningful as sociological data when they are taken with what Znaniecki refers to as “the humanistic coefficient” (Smolicz, 1979: 22,26). Since cultural systems do not exist independently of human consciousness, it follows that the researchers of cultural life must not only utilise their own conscious experience, but also be prepared to make use of the conscious experiences of the participants in the situation being studying. One of the fundamental axioms of humanistic sociology states that the participants’ experiences as social and cultural beings, as they understand and express them, must be accepted as valid sociological data.

Humanistic sociological inquiry, therefore, takes its direction from an assumption of inter-dependence between the individual, on the one hand, and social organisation and cultural activity, on the other. These basic assumptions lead to a view of culture which stresses the primacy of the meanings attached to cultural objects and experienced by

individuals as members of a social group. Indeed, cultural facts can only be understood in the form in which they are perceived by conscious human agents. It is the conscious human agents who are the final judges of a cultural fact's significance and validity. Znaniecki's writings always emphasised this sociological perspective on meaning and culture. According to humanistic sociological principles, any analysis of a group's culture which relied solely on observing behaviour and failed to take into account the written and orally recorded experiences of human actors would be a form of sterile empiricism. Ignoring the meanings that human actors, in their particular situation, attribute to their own actions and experiences represents a distortion of social reality.

### **Systems of Cultural Values**

Humanistic sociology rejects the notion of culture as an independent, external reality which can be preserved like a historic building. Culture in Smolicz's view is a "highly malleable rather than a static phenomenon" (Smolicz, 1979: 35). This view of culture as a dynamic process is derived from the definition of its essence as interactive personal and group systems of values. The fundamental proposition is that from the stock of values which are generationally transmitted by the group, individuals construct their own personal systems. Smolicz's introduction of the concept of personal systems as a mediator between the culture of the group and the private world of the individual is crucial to the interpretation of social and cultural life from the humanistic perspective (Smolicz 1979: 41). It provides both theoretical expression and practical recognition of the conscious activity of individuals in selecting values from the group stock and organising them into a system which suits their own particular purposes and interests.

A humanistic sociological analysis of culture, therefore, takes into account both group cultural value systems and personal systems of cultural values. The relevant point here is that in a plural society such as Australia, individuals are theoretically able to draw from a variety of cultural stocks. The nature of personal systems constructed by each individual is, in practice, however, dependent upon both the quality and the accessibility of group cultural systems. This is a very good theoretical guideline to the analysis of cultural maintenance by minority groups such as the Vietnamese, whose stock of values at group level is likely to be limited in societies like Australia and France. The conceptual framework utilised in this investigation also assumes that a group's culture is composed of various systems of cultural values such as ideological, social, linguistic

and religious systems (Smolicz, 1979: 33). There is some overlap between these systems of cultural values so that some values can extend over two or more systems. Cultural systems exist at two levels. Group systems of values can be seen as reservoirs from which individual members of the groups construct their own personal systems of values. In the discussion that follows, Vietnamese cultural systems are sometimes referred to as examples, derived from the researcher's personal experience.

### *The Linguistic System*

Language guides the way we see the world. We think in terms of words, phrases and sentences of our first language. Language provides us with a structure upon which we look at the world around us. For many, if not most ethnic groups, language helps to maintain their culture and preserve their ethnic group identity (Smolicz 1981).

In line with the principles of humanistic sociology, "the words of a given language can be defined as cultural objects or values in the life of a particular speech community or group" (Smolicz 1979: 112). To its native-speakers, the words of a given language are charged with cultural meanings that reach beyond the primary role of communication to have ideological significance as well. As shared cultural objects, the words of a given language may be regarded as a group's stock of linguistic values that can be transmitted from one generation to the next. Thus, from childhood, the individual constructs his/her own personal linguistic system by drawing from his/her group's repository of linguistic values, the meaning of which he/she has learned through participation in the group's life.

Individuals who have constructed their own ethnic language system may later find it difficult to activate these values for external reasons such as isolation and limited number of domains for its use. Under such circumstances, the existence of their personal linguistic system may continue to be maintained in the form of ideational attitudes. Once the hindrances are removed then there is a possibility of reactivating these linguistic values. There is a distinction in effect between two aspects of language behaviour: attitude and usage. Attitudes may vary along a range from positive to negative. Thus, an individual with a positive attitude towards the linguistic values of his/her group may have at least a conscious intention to activate them. The personal system of another individual may reveal an attitude best defined as neutral. An

individual with a neutral attitude is indifferent to his/her group's linguistic system. In a plural society where there are several systems of linguistic values, with that of the majority usually enjoying the most prestige, a predominance of individuals with indifferent attitudes to their group linguistic systems, is likely to be detrimental to the maintenance of these languages. Such is also obviously the case when large numbers of group members have negative attitudes. i.e. where individuals consciously reject their own group's linguistic values. Reasons for rejection may vary from the low prestige of the language concerned to an individual's view that the language of the majority is the key to social and economic advancement. In this situation, the linguistic system of his/her group may be seen as a hindrance to his/her material or social improvement.

At the level of tendency or activation there is also a range of possible types. Where individuals know more than one language, there may be some degree of hybridisation or interchange among the different linguistic systems. This phenomenon is most apparent when their command of one language is insufficient to express their ideas. Many of the second generation of Vietnamese speakers living in Australia or in France activate two linguistic systems, namely, Vietnamese and English or Vietnamese and French according to the social context in which they find themselves. It is not uncommon among the young Australian-born or French-born Vietnamese to make use of hybrid forms, as a result of insufficient knowledge of Vietnamese.

A meaningful study of linguistic values must, therefore, take into account attitudes towards language and the extent to which they are acted upon. Similarly, in a society such as France, activation of positive attitudes towards the Vietnamese language may be obstructed by circumstances beyond the individual's control. A French-born Vietnamese child, for instance, may have, despite his/her positive attitude, limited opportunity to maintain or learn Vietnamese literacy simply because it is not readily available as a school subject; or, on the other hand, young Vietnamese migrants may lose fluency because there are few or no domains outside the home where Vietnamese is spoken. However, for second generation Vietnamese in Australia, there is also a possibility of becoming a functional bilingual using both languages (English and Vietnamese) quite fluently in different contexts.



### ***The Religious System***

From a humanistic sociology perspective, religion is considered as a group cultural system. All aspects of religious life can be viewed as the religious values with their particular religious meanings which make up the religious system of the group. There is a close connection between religion and culture and for some ethnic groups, such as the Jews, religion constitutes their core cultural values. A total suppression of their religious system would present a serious threat to their ethnic group identity (Smolicz 1979: 61). According to Grundy "All religions are made up of a way of thinking, behaving and feeling - in other words, of a way of living; but this thinking, behaving and feeling is of a special kind" (Grundy 1958: 8). From this definition, followers of any religion build their own belief systems of how the world came into existence. They also set their own codes of rules derived from their religious belief system which governs their lifestyle. Members of a religious community are expected to perform their prayers, rituals and ceremonies which are appropriate to their religion. These are the religious values that active followers must practise or activate to remain members of the group.

For the purpose of this study, Vietnamese religious systems and their influences on the Vietnamese culture, as well as the question of whether religion forms one of the core components of Vietnamese cultural values are considered in Chapter 9. Also in this same Chapter 9, there is a detailed discussion of the Christian belief system as practised by members of the Vietnamese Catholic communities in Australia and in France to see whether these religious practices have any effects on the maintenance and transmission of the faith and culture to future generations of these communities.

### ***The Social System***

Humanistic sociological theory considers every human being as a social value in the same way as every word is taken as a linguistic value. Znaniecki perceives individuals as cultural values having both content and meaning and views individuals as fulfilling a double role: the first being an active social agent, the second being social objects of the activities of others. As Znaniecki puts it, "A social person is a centre of relationships with a number of other persons and groups, in which relationships he appears as object of their activities and they appear as objects of his activities" (Znaniecki 1968:132).

As with other systems of cultural values, social systems are classified into "group" and "personal". Group social systems are comprised of the institutions, organisations and the network of relationships in which individuals are associated with one another and constitute social values for one another. As such, group systems are stocks or repositories of social values which are employed by individuals in the construction of personal social systems. Social systems are brought into existence with the co-operation of all members. In this regard, social systems can be seen as the creation of individuals, while at the same time individuals become part of the product itself so that they can be regarded as social values for one another. Social relationships among individuals can be divided into primary and secondary relationships. Primary relationships include those contacts which are personal, informal and usually face to face and involving the entire human personality. These are most often found in the primary social system of the family which has a special significance for Vietnamese people. Secondary relationships are of a more formal nature such as those found in a work situation: impersonal, formal and restricted. These relationships are not mutually exclusive since certain social values can be included in both types of relationships with the same individual. This primary and secondary distinction applies to social systems as well as to relationships.

Each individual in society is likely to move in fairly distinct social circles: a primary one of family and close friends and a secondary system consisting, for example, of fellow workers or business colleagues. What is important, in the context of this study, which relies largely on evidence provided by individual participants, is that the concept of personal systems puts the individual at the centre of his/her network of relationships both at primary and secondary level. As such, he/she is both the initiator and the object of social action. An analysis of the personal social systems constructed by individuals is an important means therefore, of discovering the extent to which they have maintained their own language and culture and of assessing the degree to which they have adapted to that of mainstream society. Again, as with the linguistic system, the opportunities for the Vietnamese individual to construct a personal system with members of his/her own group in Australia or in France is not difficult, if that person lives in the metropolitan area, as the size of each Vietnamese community in these areas is relatively large and its linguistic and cultural activities are quite extensive.

The concept of group systems of social values is very important for a study of cultural maintenance and transmission as the relevant point here is that language and culture are social phenomena. An analysis of Vietnamese language and cultural retention must take account, therefore, not only of the individual's personal linguistic and social systems but also of the total social milieu in which he/she moves.

Smolicz (1979) argued that some ethnic communities like Italian or Chinese have strong primary social groups consisting of extended families, or in the case of the Polish group, informal social circles. This is less evident amongst the Anglo-Celtic mainstream population of Australia or the Franco mainstream population in France. Moreover, at the primary group level, Anglo-Celtic or Franco society tends to demonstrate an individualist ethos, whereas ethnic groups, such as the Greek, the Chinese or the Vietnamese, place much greater emphasis on primary group relationships which foster strong collectivist values. In contrast, secondary social systems emphasising collectivist values are, on the whole, more characteristic of the Anglo-Celtic mainstream. Examples include service clubs, sporting organizations, church groups and professional bodies (Smolicz 1979: 156-8).

From the researcher's personal observation and participation in the two communities, Vietnamese Catholics in Australia or in France, would be members of each other's secondary group system by mere fact that they have the same faith, language and culture. But many of them over time have developed this into primary personal relationships, so that they represent primary social values in each other's personal systems.

### ***The Ideological System***

The most vital component of the cultural value systems is the ideological system which has the crucially important function of co-ordinating and evaluating the totality of the group's stock of social and cultural values. All aspects of the group's life are touched in one way or another by ideological values. In broader terms, the ideological system is what Znaniecki (1980: 267) refers to as the group's "standards of values and norms of conduct." or the "principles of judgment and ways of acting which members are supposed to accept and abide by" (Smolicz 1979: 34).

In the process of transmitting cultural values from one generation to the next, it is the ideological system which not only acts as a sorting and evaluating agent, but also helps to shape the individual's and the group's social systems. Accordingly, it is the degree of efficiency with which the ideological system functions which determines the vitality of a cultural group. At the same time, constant ideological re-evaluation militates against cultural atrophy. In this capacity, the ideological system has two main purposes: firstly, to assess those cultural values which are received from previous generations as heritage; secondly, to examine and select those values which are acquired by each generation as a new stock to be added to, integrated with, or even to replace the old.

This evaluative role of the ideological system throws a different light therefore, on such familiar aspects of cultural life as heritage and tradition. This is a concept of tradition sufficiently generous to admit new or invented traditions into a group's total repertoire without damaging its established historical consciousness. What matters, Smolicz (1974: 76) points out, is "whether the newly propagated or emergent tradition meets the right psychological climate, whether it is in tune with the sentiments and aspirations of a given human group". Once vetted by the ideological system of values, they can become accepted in due course as authentic group cultural markers and incorporated into the group "tradition". In this study it is this aspect of the theoretical framework which makes provision for the Vietnamese in Australia or those in France, especially the second-generation Vietnamese in these two countries, to construct their Vietnamese cultural identity.

It is also in the context of the ideological system that the applicability to this investigation of Smolicz's notion of personal cultural systems is most readily apparent. The ideological system at the personal level may be regarded, in Smolicz's (1979: 46) words, as "a set of attitudes with ideological values constituting their group counterpart". Attitudes could be divided into "ideational attitudes" which are not practised in reality, and "realistic attitudes" which are expressed as "tendencies" in the performance of actions. It should be noted that "tendencies" in humanistic sociology refer to the implementation or activation of cultural values. Some minority ethnic children express realistic attitudes towards their home language by using the language in public without fear of becoming outcasts from their majority peer group. At the other extreme, are children who display a positive "ideational attitude" to their mother tongue, but who are unable to activate them as a realistic attitude due to being denied access to

their group linguistic system, due to isolation or lack of schooling. To a large extent, therefore, the dynamism of cultures derives from the interplay between attitudes at the level of individuals, and values at the level of the group.

Although each individual constructs, by a process of conscious choice, his/her own personal system of cultural values, derived from that of the group, the outcome is influenced by a number of factors which may include the degree of accessibility to the group system, its prevailing ideological emphasis, and the individual's own psychological make-up and experiences. In a plural society, perhaps the key issue for groups such as the Vietnamese is that of the accessibility of the group stock of values for each individual in the group.

Each individual activates the cultural values of his/her own group in different ways and at different levels of intensity. Collectively, however, they are recognizable as the values of a particular group for the reason that most individuals construct systems from within accepted limits. All cultures retain a cluster of central or core values. As the theoretical centrepiece of this study, Smolicz's notion of core values must be further explicated.

### **Core Values and Cultural Identity**

Within the ideological system certain cultural values referred to as 'core', constitute "the heartland of the ideological system and act as identifying values which are symbolic of the group and its membership" (Smolicz and Secombe 1981: 15). Core values are therefore, so inseparable from the group's definitive cultural profile, that the repeated rejection of them by an individual may result in his/her ultimate exclusion or voluntary withdrawal from group membership. As such, within the framework of humanistic sociology, core values serve as a crucial link between a group's cultural and social systems. They are vital to the group's existence as a separate cultural entity. In this function they define group identity by specifying the criteria for membership. Similarly, identity at the level of the individual may be defined in terms of the attitudes that a person holds towards the core values of his/her group. Consequently, individual attitudes must always be interpreted in the context of the group cultural values with which they have a dynamic inter-relationship. Within the humanistic sociological

framework, therefore, ethnic cultural identity is a phenomenon which is experienced by both groups and individuals.

Cultural groups are distinguishable by the core values which they collectively uphold. From this it follows that a threat to the core values of a culture is a threat to its very existence. A considerable body of research shows that in plural societies such as Australia, where pressure to conform to mainstream culture is still relatively pronounced, minority groups such as the Vietnamese, must be fully aware of the cores of their cultures (Smolicz and Harris, 1976). Whether such awareness is translated into active, defensive strategies, in the form, for example, of an intensified cultural life, may be said to depend on the group's "ethnic tenacity" (Smolicz and Secombe, 1989: 480) on the degree of its predisposition, that is, to preserve its linguistic and cultural distinctiveness. Ethnic tenacity may therefore be evaluated in terms of individual and group adherence to the core values which form the heartland of a culture.

These central, enduring values of an ethnic group may vary from religion, as in the case of the Irish or the Jews, to family for the Italians or racial cohesion for the Chinese (Smolicz, 1980). In the study of ethnic cultures, the researcher should bear in mind that groups may adhere to more than one core value, and that in this situation, a hierarchy of core values may be constructed. Although there is evidence to suggest that cultural groups differ in the extent to which they emphasise their native tongues as core values, language is, for most cultures, the epicentre of their total value constellation (Smolicz, 1991). As the repository of collective historical experience, as the symbol and carrier of culture, and, not least, as a distinctive means of communication, it is not surprising that language features as the principal cohesive force in group life and the most obvious marker of group difference.

The relationship between language and identity is one of the most explored areas of recent sociolinguistic research, with the bulk of the evidence pointing to their inseparability in most cultures (Clyne, 1988, 1991; Fishman, 1981, 1989; Pozetta, 1991). At the other extreme, and perhaps more pertinent to the study of minority cultures in plural societies, is the possibility that group identity can, and often does, survive the collapse of language as a core value, even in cultures that are pre-eminently language-centred. The suggestion is that, in this situation, group solidarity may shift to those

remnants or residues of heritage when the 'core' has gone. Such cultural residues may well include language in a reduced role as emblem or symbol – revered but not spoken, where it is no longer a living force in the group life (Smolicz 1979: 86).

### **Smolicz's Model of Cultural Adaptation**

Theoretically, in a plural society such as Australia, each individual has access to at least two sets of group cultural values: that of his/her own ethnic group, and that of mainstream Anglo-Australian society. In practice, this is far from being the case. Each individual's choice may be influenced in the first instance, by the ideological orientation of his/her own group towards the maintenance of its language and culture. Groups vary in the degree of their "ethnic tenacity", that is, their determination to preserve their linguistic and cultural distinctiveness. In practice, it has also been shown that if a person is a member of one of the smaller groups, he/she may be constrained by its limited cultural capital, its geographically dispersed membership, and its lack of supportive social and educational structures. A second generation Vietnamese-Australian living in Alice Springs, for instance, may, against all odds, have learnt Vietnamese but be unable to find any public domain where it is normally spoken, apart from his/her own home. Alternatively, a Vietnamese child may wish to learn Vietnamese but find this difficult, not because of lack of learning resources or tuition, but because of opposition from his/her own parents who may see the learning of Vietnamese as detrimental to proficiency in English, the language, in their opinion, of social and material advancement.

The other key factor in the construction and implementation of personal cultural systems in a plural society is the ideological orientation of mainstream society towards minority ethnic cultures. According to Smolicz (1979: 201-7) there could be four possible ideological orientations as follows:

- i. **Dominant Monism or Monism** refers to a policy aiming at a culturally homogeneous society. Individuals, in this situation, would be encouraged to construct personal cultural systems based on the values of the dominant group. Other ethnic cultures would be expected to evaporate within one or two generations. This corresponds to the assimilation policy typical of the 60's in Australia and to the still prevailing assumption in France.

- ii. **Hybrid Monism** leads to a synthesis or ‘melting pot’ situation whereby the dominant culture absorbs minority values so as to produce a new hybrid stock.
- iii. **External Pluralism** implies the co-existence of separate cultures but with little in the way of interaction. An individual in this situation would draw extensively from his/her own group’s stock of values but society overall would be pluralistic.
- iv. **Internal Cultural Pluralism** proposes a pluralism of values internalized by the individual. In this situation cultural interaction enables individuals to construct dual systems of cultural values and to draw from either with relative ease according to circumstances and needs. In practice, this would mean that, in Australia for instance, a member of an ethnic group would be able, on the one hand, (if he/she so chooses) to use his/her own language in his/her own cultural milieu, and, on the other, through his/her knowledge of English, to move easily and confidently in mainstream Anglo-Australian society. Similarly, an Anglo-Australian, by virtue of his/her knowledge of a language other than English, would have access to a cultural system other than his/her own.

In arguing for the internal pluralistic model known as multiculturalism as the most conducive to the preservation of cultural diversity and social cohesion for a plural society such as Australia, Smolicz (1989: 10-14) emphasised the important corollary of the sharing of certain overarching values by the whole population. By this he meant that, although the internal pluralistic framework recognizes and promotes cultural diversity, it makes provision for a set of values which, transcending particular group systems and shared by all, maintains the essential unity and cohesion of the body-politic. Thus, in Australia, such well-established ideological values as parliamentary democracy, the rule of law, the concept of individual rights, the acceptance of cultural diversity as part of the nation and above all, the English language, are in effect overarching values shared by Australians of all cultural backgrounds.

Smolicz’s advocacy of internal pluralism rather than assimilation as a model which encouraged cultural interaction between immigrants and the host society was given some government support at both Commonwealth and State levels for more than three decades. As a result, a minority group like the Vietnamese had their linguistic and religious values, their family patterns and food readily available both for Vietnamese background individuals and others who might have wished to interact with the Vietnamese group, to make use of in constructing their own personal systems. In



theory, there were no barriers or obstacles to such construction, but in practice the freedom to make use of these Vietnamese cultural values was often far more limited. If the Vietnamese did not have "ethnic tenacity" (Smolicz and Secombe, 1981:18), they could easily be assimilated into the culture of the dominant Anglo-Australian group as the final outcome of social interaction in the mainstream Australian society. In the case of the Vietnamese community in France, a country where there has been no official policy of multiculturalism or community language policy helping migrants to maintain their language and culture, it would be important to find out to what extent this "ethnic tenacity" has helped the Vietnamese community to protect their cultural identity in this situation.

Clearly these ideological orientations have educational implications vital to language and cultural maintenance. They are particularly important in the case of numerically smaller groups, whose potential domains of language and cultural activation are likely to be very limited. The monistic models, by definition, call for little comment in this context, the results of their implementation being cultural and linguistic uniformity. Educational policy would thereby be determined not by the concerns of the ethnic communities but by the interests of the dominant majority.

Both pluralist frameworks, by contrast, envisage the maintenance of ethnic languages and cultures, implying the need therefore, for supportive educational structures. It is the internal pluralistic model, however, which calls for the most comprehensive educational programme to this end – one which would lead to the creation of opportunities for all students from primary to tertiary levels to benefit from an inclusive language and cultural curriculum. Over three decades from 1975, this principle was incorporated in educational policy guidelines at state and federal level especially in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. Unfortunately, in recent years multiculturalism has been under serious attack and language education policy has not been giving such strong support to community languages.

### **Methodological Implications**

The methodology adopted for the analysis of cultural experiences of Vietnamese immigrants in Australia and in France as reported on data collected over the period 2000-2005, is consistent with the two fundamental assumptions of humanistic

sociology: Firstly, that the social and cultural events which happened to the Vietnamese people can only be fully understood when they are studied from the viewpoints of those Vietnamese people who experienced them or were directly involved. The application of the humanistic coefficient principle requires the researcher to thoroughly study the intentions, experiences and activities of the participants as conscious human agents within the context of their cultural situation and social roles, and also as they themselves perceived their external realities and personal choices.

Secondly, the methodological procedure adopted in this study aims at understanding individuals' social and cultural experiences not merely through the objective concrete facts of their personal background and life history but through insights gained from understanding each individual participant's interpretation of his/her life experience as reported in the research data. These insights depend on analysing the concrete and cultural facts which can be identified in the data from a set of participants. The quality of the analysis also depends on the ability of the researcher to reflect empathetically on another person's experience by bringing to bear her own personal experience of the situations being studied. It has been recognised that sharing the same culture, language or social situation with the respondents can prove to be an important aid in such interpretation, as in the case of this study where the researcher was Vietnamese and much a part of the group and its culture (Smolicz, 1979:25-6).

These theoretical positions required data gathering methods which encouraged participants to reveal their social and cultural experiences as fully as possible. Thus, the participants of this study were encouraged by the researcher to freely and directly express their thoughts, opinions, attitudes, feelings and evaluation of their experiences, through various research methods, as described in the following section of this chapter.

### ***Methods of Gathering Data***

The researcher made use of a triangulation approach which enabled the collection of different kinds of data relevant to this qualitative investigation. Each data collection method on its own was limited and potentially flawed; the inclusion of several methods gave rise to greater knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study and overcame the deficiencies that would have resulted from a single method and single source of data.

In this investigation, three types of triangulations were used namely: theoretical, methodological and data source. Theoretical triangulation involved the use of several perspectives in the analysis of the same set of data. In this study, the cultural adaptation experiences of Vietnamese immigrants were analysed using the Smolicz's humanistic sociological theory as the main conceptual framework and method of analysis. However, where it was appropriate, other theoretical perspectives were also used to compare or contrast data from Australia and France.

In relation to method triangulation, the researcher utilised a variety of methods to collect data, namely:

- self-administered questionnaires
- oral and written memoirs
- interviews
- participant observation
- documentary evidence

In reference to different sources of data, McNeill (1985: 92) wrote, “The data that is used by sociologists may be primary or secondary. Primary data is collected by the researcher at first hand, mainly through surveys, interviews or participant observation. Secondary data is available from other sources and comes in various forms”. For this study, the researcher gathered primary data from the participants both in France and in Australia using questionnaires, interviews, participant observation, written memoirs, as well as oral memoirs that the researcher recorded, and then transcribed. The researcher also obtained secondary data through relevant documents such as newspapers, magazines, newsletters, photographs, radio programs, and books published by the Vietnamese communities in France and in Australia.

To summarize, the researcher followed the approach that Denzin (1970) suggested: “The greater the triangulation, the greater the confidence in the observed findings. The obverse is equally true. The conclusion is evident: sociologists must move beyond single method”. The researcher strongly believes that a combination of methods in qualitative research enables the gathering of information from different perspectives in a way that can considerably increase the understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

It is recognised that each of the above methods of gathering data has its own strengths and weaknesses so it is worth considering each method and its application to the present investigation in the following discussion.

## **The Questionnaires**

The questionnaire as a means of gathering data is probably the most common method of sociological research. There are advantages and limitations in this questionnaire method of gathering information. The researcher is totally dependent on the respondents' willingness to answer and the honesty of their self assessment, as well as their ability to interpret and understand the questions. In order to avoid any misunderstanding and to test the effectiveness of the questionnaire designed for the group of participants in Adelaide aged 12-25, the researcher used the first draft of the questionnaire in a pilot study with a group of 20 Year 12 students studying Vietnamese at St Mary's Vietnamese School. As a result of this trial, some questions concerning linguistic competence were modified to make them clearer and more appropriate.

As the researcher intended to obtain as much information as possible through the questionnaire and, where possible, to cross-check this set of data with other data obtained by different methods, especially the oral memoir method, the questionnaire became a lengthy one with a total of 55 questions. The questions on personal details of the respondents were important for the researcher to establish the concrete fact profiles of the respondents and enable a better understanding of their cultural data.

Three different bilingual self-administered questionnaires were utilised for this study in order to obtain the background concrete facts concerning the participants and the cultural data expressing their evaluation and activation of Vietnamese cultural values. Copies of all three can be found in the Appendices. The different questionnaires utilised in this study were:

- i) French-Vietnamese main questionnaire (*Appendix 1*);
- ii) English-Vietnamese main questionnaire for adults (*Appendix 2*);
- iii) English-Vietnamese questionnaire for young people aged 12-25 (*Appendix 3*).

In France, about 100 questionnaires were distributed during the researcher's first field trip in 2000; the researcher received back 60 responses (60%). In her second field trip in 2001, the researcher left a number of questionnaires with the chaplain of the Vietnamese Catholic community in Paris, as he had promised to distribute them to people, then to collect them and send them back to Australia for the researcher. However, two months afterwards, the researcher received a card from the chaplain saying that he was unable to help, as people did not want to disclose their personal information by filling out the questionnaire. It was disappointing that the researcher was unable to get a larger number of participants from France. However, 60 respondents formed an adequate number for the purposes of this research.

In Australia, a total of 500 questionnaires (250 for adults and 250 for young people aged 12-25) were distributed in 2003 and the researcher received 384 responses (77% overall). Of these responses, 182 were from adults and 202 from young people aged 12 to 25). When examining the questionnaires, the researcher decided to leave out the responses from students lower than Year 7 to concentrate on those from Years 7-12 and university only. The main reason for this decision was that these students were too young to be able to answer certain questions appropriately. The researcher also eliminated 22 responses from a particular group of elderly respondents whose answers were almost identical, without any of the personal detail questions being answered. Thus, the usefulness of these 22 responses was in serious doubt. Consequently, the total number of questionnaire responses that were used in the analysis of this study was 400.

### **Content and Structure of the Questionnaires**

The overall structure and content of the three questionnaires were basically the same. They were designed to gather information from the participants on their personal background and their experiences of living in the host countries, with particular emphasis on their cultural, educational and linguistic experiences. The main questionnaire was designed in English first, and then translated by the researcher into French and Vietnamese. It consisted of 50 questions divided into five different sections:

- Section one: Personal details with 15 questions
- Section two: Migration decision with 8 questions
- Section three: Linguistic experience with 11 questions

- Section four: Social and Family life with 7 questions
- Section five: Identity and Adaptation with 9 questions.

The structure of the Vietnamese-English questionnaire for young people aged 12-25 in Australia was slightly different. It had an additional section on educational experiences with 7 questions and 3 additional questions on Vietnamese language learning experiences, as the researcher intended to gather additional information on educational experiences, especially Vietnamese language learning experiences of young people from Vietnamese background in Australian schools. For the details of each questionnaire, refer to *Appendices 1-3*.

### **Oral memoirs**

The theoretical concepts of humanistic sociological research described in an earlier section called for a methodology which encouraged the participants to describe their social and cultural experiences, as much as possible through the direct expression of their thoughts, attitudes, feeling and judgments. In this research, the oral memoir method was used in conjunction with other methods of gathering data.

In practice, the oral memoirs were in-depth interviews conducted by the researcher face-to-face or through a speakerphone and recorded on cassette tapes which were later transcribed. These oral memoir interviews were constructed around a schedule of open-ended questions and stimulus questions (See *Appendices 4 & 5*). The questions varied from time to time, depending on the situation of the participants. They were designed to elicit relevant data on personal and cultural life history of the participants by encouraging them to tell their stories in the most free-flowing and authentic way possible. The length of each interview was also different. They varied from half an hour to two full hours. It was found that the success of oral memoir interview technique depended greatly on the good rapport and the trust established during the interview, between the researcher and the respondent. As the researcher is fluent in three languages namely Vietnamese, English and French, the participants could choose to be interviewed in the language they felt most comfortable with. It was also possible for the respondent to switch from one language to another e.g., Vietnamese to English or Vietnamese to French and vice versa during the interview. This often happened in interviews with second generation participants.

For this study, a total of fifty-four oral memoir interviews were conducted: forty-one in Australia and thirteen in France. It was found that, during these oral memoir interviews, the respondents spontaneously provided valuable information and observations on those aspects of their cultural experiences that stayed clearly in their memories. These were often the very elements which ultimately defined their cultural systems at the personal level; this type of cultural information would have been very difficult for the researcher to obtain through the questionnaire survey. A detailed analysis of the cultural data obtained from oral memoir interviews is presented in *Chapter 4*.

### **Written Memoirs**

As one of the main aims of this study was to examine the question of language and culture maintenance and the educational experiences of second generation Vietnamese in Australia, the researcher invited a number of senior high school students of Vietnamese background to write memoirs on their educational experiences, related in particular to learning Vietnamese in Australia. A total of sixteen written memoirs in English were received from this group. The length of each memoir varied. The longest had 1489 words and the shortest 545 words. These memoirs constituted another valuable set of cultural data to complement that obtained from the oral memoirs.

### **Interviews with Community Leaders & Educational Authorities**

The researcher also conducted a total of thirty-five interviews in meetings with leaders of the Vietnamese Catholic communities and educational authorities in Adelaide and in Paris. Sometimes these interviews were quite formal in following a set order of questions; others were more informal and spontaneous discussions of the issues raised by the researcher.

***In France***, a total of ten interviews were conducted by the researcher for this part of the study. During her first field trip in France, the researcher interviewed five Catholic priests, one nun and one permanent deacon, who were all working together in the chaplain team for the Vietnamese Catholic community in Paris at the time. The nun has since died. These interviews were conducted in Vietnamese; some of them were recorded on cassette tapes, some were recorded in note form by the researcher. The questions used in these interviews were open-ended in nature, with the aim of eliciting information and viewpoints from these leaders on the history and activities of the

community which were directly related to the cultural life of its members (*Appendix 6*). During this same trip the researcher also interviewed two Vietnamese university lecturers in Paris, one elderly leader in the Vietnamese community and a representative of the Ministry of Education, to seek information on the official policies regarding minority languages and culture maintenance in France.

During her second field trip to France in 2001, the researcher went back to the same Vietnamese Catholic community, at its new location in Paris, to conduct a second interview with the main chaplain and one interview with a priest who had recently joined the chaplain team. Thus, in total, twelve interviews with leaders from the Vietnamese Catholic community and one with a representative from the Ministry of Education, were conducted in Paris for this study.

***In Australia***, the researcher conducted a total of twenty interviews with leaders of the Vietnamese community and five meetings with relevant educational authorities. The twenty interviews with Adelaide Vietnamese community leaders were conducted in Vietnamese, using a similar question format to that used in France.

The following is a list of those Vietnamese leaders who were interviewed:

1. Current president of the Vietnamese Community in Australia, SA Chapter
2. Vice-president of the Vietnamese Community in Australia, SA Chapter
3. Former president of the Vietnamese Community in Australia, SA Chapter
4. Founding president of the Vietnamese Community in Australia, SA Chapter
5. Former chaplain of the Vietnamese Catholic Community in Australia
6. Current chaplain of the Vietnamese Catholic Community in Australia
7. Immediate former Chaplain of the Vietnamese Catholic Community in Australia
8. A nun, pastoral associate for the Vietnamese Catholic Community in Australia
9. Acting president of the South Australian Vietnamese Teachers' Association Inc
10. Secretary of the South Australian Vietnamese Teachers' Association Inc
11. President of the Vietnamese Elderly Association in SA
12. Secretary of the Vietnamese Elderly group in Salisbury SA
13. Leader of the Vietnamese Choir – Woodville Findon Parish
14. Co-ordinator of the Vietnamese artists group in South Australia
15. President of the Association of Vietnamese Professionals, SA Branch
16. Immediate past president of Vietnamese Women Association in SA
17. Editor of a Vietnamese weekly newspaper in South Australia



18. Vice-president of the " Đồng Tâm Tương Tế " Association in SA
19. Former vice-president of the Vietnamese Students Association in SA
20. Editor of "Sống Việt" Video company in South Australia

Many of the above people also contributed to the study as oral memoir respondents. Thus, the interview with these people consisted of two separate parts. The first part of the interview was about the association and the individual's involvement in that association. The second part of the interview was devoted to the in-depth interview questions of the oral memoir, using the same approach used for other oral memoir interviews. These interviews were recorded on cassette tapes and processed in the same manner as other oral memoir interviews.

### **Meetings with Relevant Educational Authorities**

In addition, the researcher conducted five meetings with staff members from relevant educational authorities in Adelaide, namely The Education Department of South Australia, The Ethnic Schools' Board and The Ethnic Schools' Association, as well as two telephone conversations with the executive officer of The Federation of Ethnic Schools' Association in Australia. The purpose of these meetings was to gather information on Vietnamese language programs and policies in both the mainstream school and ethnic school systems in Australia and in South Australia in particular.

Thus, a total of thirty-five interviews were conducted by the researcher in France and in Australia, in order to elicit relevant information for the study. This set of data is vital to the study and has been used to confirm the humanistic sociological analysis of data obtained from oral and written memoirs.

### **Participant Observation**

Observation of the participants in a study can be one of the most direct means of data gathering in social research. It is particularly valuable to have the opportunity to observe, while being a participant in the particular group or situation concerned. This method offers the researcher a number of advantages, the most obvious one being the chance to compare and cross-check evidence from other sources, to verify, for example, whether the respondents in defined situations do what they say they do in their

responses to questionnaires or oral memoirs. In addition, participant observation enables a much greater depth of understanding in the interpretation of data. Participant observation for this study started long before the project began. For the last thirty years, the researcher's professional life and personal interests have been focused on the cultural life of the Vietnamese people in Australia and overseas. Being one of the Vietnamese community leaders who was heavily involved in the establishment, as well as the operation of a number of Vietnamese organisations in South Australia for many years, she has had many opportunities to experience the unfolding life of these organisations as a member and to observe the behaviours of other participants as well.

The researcher was part of the founding chaplain team for the Vietnamese Catholic Community in Adelaide for some ten years (1975-1985) and since then she has continued to assist the community in some areas of pastoral work such as the choir group, Cursillo movement, marriage preparation course and community retreats etc. She regularly attends Mass, meetings, functions and activities of this community. She has observed, with care and special interest, the growth of this community from a humble group of about thirty members in 1975 to the biggest Vietnamese organisation in South Australia with approximately three thousand five hundred members in 2005. As an accepted participant in the Vietnamese Catholic community in Adelaide over this period, the researcher had numerous informal conversations and talks with different members of the community on issues related to the maintenance of Vietnamese language and culture; these proved most helpful in the interpretation of data in this study.

With regard to those participants who belonged to the Vietnamese Catholic community in Paris, the researcher had less opportunity to observe them in action. However, the researcher did participate in their community activities when she studied in France from 1968-1974. During her three field trips in France for this research, each time she stayed for a month and was able to attend the Vietnamese Mass there every Sunday and be part of the choir. She also participated in a youth camp and observed the Vietnamese Ethnic School classes in operation on Saturdays. While taking part in these activities, the researcher was able to talk informally to the chaplains, leaders of the community, teachers and students of the ethnic school, as well as to many other people and to

observe the way in which they participated in their community's religious and cultural activities.

Apart from her involvement in the Vietnamese Catholic communities, the researcher has also been actively involved in the educational and cultural activities of many other Vietnamese organisations at state and national levels in Australia. Because of her roles in these organisations, especially in her role as lecturer of Vietnamese Language and Culture at tertiary level for sixteen years at the former South Australian College of Advanced Education, then Adelaide University, the researcher organised and participated in numerous Vietnamese language and culture conferences and other cultural activities of the Vietnamese community in Australia. Thus, over the last thirty years of her life in Australia, as an educator and community leader, she has had many opportunities to participate in and observe, as an insider, the lives and activities of community members, gaining insights and understanding that proved most useful for this study.

The researcher's involvement in teaching Vietnamese as a Year 12 subject for the South Australian Certificate of Education at St Mary's Vietnamese Ethnic School, as well as her teaching of Vietnamese as an Arts subject at the University of Adelaide, provided other possibilities for participant observation. In these contexts, she was interacting with the younger generation of Vietnamese who had mainly been born in Australia and were studying Vietnamese as a subject toward their Year 12 Certificate or their University degree. She was able to observe these students in relation to their competence in, and attitudes toward Vietnamese, and hear them discussing issues that were important to them. The participant observation approach was particularly effective with a group of twenty-five year 11 students she taught in 2002 and also in 2003, when this same group of students progressed to year 12. It should be noted, however, that not all of these Year 12 and university students came from the Vietnamese Catholic community. These classes included some young people from the Vietnamese community in general or from the Vietnamese Buddhist community; they had asked to join the classes, in order to extend their study of the Vietnamese language. The researcher had many informal conversations and talks with students that she taught at Adelaide University and St Mary's Vietnamese School before and during the course of this study. Such discussions proved very valuable in evaluating the authenticity of the data gathered, in understanding their views on the question of Vietnamese identity and in interpreting their attitudes towards Vietnamese language and culture in Australia.

## **Documentary Evidence**

An important source of the secondary data used for this study came from documents obtained from relevant community organisations and public institutions both in France and in Australia over the period 2000-2005.

### ***Documents used as evidence in the study include:***

1. Newsletters, magazines and books published by the Vietnamese Catholic communities in France and in Australia.
2. Vietnamese weekly newspapers in Australia
3. Vietnamese radio programs in Australia.
4. Documentary films and videos produced overseas on topics of Vietnamese language and culture or Vietnamese migrants and refugees, especially those produced in France and in Australia.
5. Journal of Vietnamese Studies, edited by Dr Nguyen Xuan Thu, Victoria.
6. Vietnamese Conference papers and proceedings published in Australia.
7. Census data of Vietnamese population in Australia and in France.
8. Documents and statistics from The Ethnic Schools' Board of South Australia.
9. Documents and statistics from The Ethnic Schools' Association of SA Inc.
10. Documents and statistics from The Department of Education and Children Services.
11. Documents and statistics from Multicultural Education Committee (MEC).
12. Internet websites on Vietnamese Studies and Vietnamese people overseas.
13. Documents and Statistics from the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia (SSABSA), now the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) Board of South Australia.

All of the above documents constituted another complementary source of data gathering. Information obtained from the documentary evidence method proved to be very important to this study.

## ***The participants***

In the last section of this chapter, the researcher discusses the procedures she employed in contacting potential participants for this study. She also gives an overview of the participants' profiles according to humanistic sociological research principles. Table 3.1 on the following page gives an overview of the participants, linked to the research

methods used by the researcher to gather evidence for this study. It can be clearly seen that the data utilised in this study came from a variety of sources, gathered by different data gathering methods. Each set of data proved important for the completion of the study since they served as useful complementary evidence for one other.

## **Contacting Participants**

The specific approach used to gather participants for each research method was partly outlined in the above discussion of methods of research. However, it should be pointed out that the majority of the 400 questionnaire respondents and 60 memoir contributors in the total group of respondents was drawn from the Adelaide Vietnamese Catholic Community at South Terrace Pooraka, together with the Vietnamese Catholic Community at Woodville-Findon Parish and the Vietnamese Catholic Community in Paris.

### ***Questionnaire respondents***

The process for contacting questionnaire respondents in Adelaide was started with an open invitation letter written in Vietnamese from the researcher to the whole community, asking people to participate in the research via the Vietnamese Catholic community's weekly newsletters and the Vietnamese weekly newspapers in South Australia. This invitation was also mentioned in an interview, when the researcher was invited to talk about the study by "Song Viet" Video Company in South Australia. There were numerous other community group gatherings or conferences in France and in Australia, where the researcher had the opportunity to address the groups, talk about the overall aim of the study and seeking their participation. Then, with permission from the priest in charge of the Catholic communities, the invitation letter was printed in the Vietnamese Catholic community newsletters a few weeks prior to the distribution of questionnaires at church gatherings for Sunday Mass in November 2003. Questionnaires were also distributed through leaders of significant religious groups and movements within the Vietnamese Catholic community e.g., the Viet Linh Choir, Hy Vong Choir, Eucharistic Children Movement, Legion of Mary, and Cursillo Movement. People had the choice of returning the completed questionnaire by posting it directly to the researcher using the

**Table 3. 1 Methods of Gathering Data and Participants**

<b>Methods</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
<b>Questionnaires: English - Vietnamese (2001-2004)</b>	340 Respondents from Australia (160 adults and 180 young people)
<b>Questionnaires: French - Vietnamese (2000-2001)</b>	60 Respondents from France
<b>Oral Memoirs: English - Vietnamese (2003-2004)</b>	41 Respondents from Australia
<b>Oral Memoirs: French - Vietnamese (2000-2001)</b>	13 Respondents from France
<b>Written Memoirs: English - Vietnamese (Beginning 2004)</b>	16 Respondents from Australia
<b>Interviews (formal and informal) (2000-2003)</b>	30 (20 in Australia and 10 in France) with community leaders and educational officers
<b>Participant Observation (1996 -2004)</b>	5 Vietnamese community based organisations and groups in Australia and in France (both Catholic and non-Catholic)
<b>Documentary Evidence (2000-2005)</b>	13 types of documents were used as evidence listed on pages 88-89 of this chapter

self-addressed stamped envelope provided with the questionnaire or to their respective group leader.

As one of the aims of this study was to explore cultural adaptation experiences, especially attitudes and activations of Vietnamese linguistic values among second generation Vietnamese in Australia, the researcher made a deliberate effort to recruit as many young people (aged 12-25) as possible, by contacting Vietnamese teachers in mainstream schools, as well as in Vietnamese ethnic schools in South Australia. The 202 questionnaire respondents in this category came from these schools and the Eucharistic Children Movement within the Vietnamese Catholic Community in South Australia. It should be noted that, as the majority of these young people were studying Vietnamese at the time through these schools, they could have had more favourable attitudes towards Vietnamese language and culture than other Vietnamese young people of the same age group.

Similar approaches were used to recruit sixty questionnaire participants and thirteen oral memoir contributors through the Vietnamese Catholic Community in Paris. There were no opportunities, however, to make contact with the younger Vietnamese-French generation and find out their experiences of cultural adaptation in France.

### ***Oral and written memoir contributors***

The selection of oral memoir contributors in Australia was done in two stages. Firstly, an invitation letter was distributed together with the questionnaires to invite people to fill in the questionnaire, and then volunteer for oral memoir interviews if they wished. As already mentioned above, this invitation letter was printed in the Vietnamese Catholic community newsletters both in Paris and Adelaide, as well as the Vietnamese weekly newspapers in Australia. Although most people were willing to complete the questionnaire and then send it back to the researcher, no one volunteered for the oral memoir interview. Thus, the researcher, based on the list of people who had responded to the questionnaire, selected people to ring and asked specifically for their co-operation in the oral memoir interview. The criteria used in making this selection were first of all the willingness of the participants, their age group, their occupation and length of residence in the host countries. In the end, a total of forty-one people from the questionnaire group were interviewed by the researcher for their oral memoirs. Apart from this group, the researcher also invited a group of sixteen high school students (from Years 11 and 12) who were studying Vietnamese at the time (2005) to contribute their written memoirs as another source of data for this study.

It had been the intention of the researcher to have a balanced number of oral memoir contributors among the first and second generations and an equal number of participants from France and from Australia, but it was not possible to do the latter, because of the reluctance of people in Paris to contribute to the research in this way. This could have been due to the fact that Vietnamese people in Paris did not see that this research had any direct connection to their daily lives in a monocultural society like France.

## **The specific nature of the participant groups**

Finally, it should be pointed out that this study is focused on the Vietnamese Catholic community in Adelaide and, to a lesser degree, the Vietnamese Catholic community in Paris. Therefore, almost all the *400 questionnaire respondents and 60 memoir contributors* (also part of the questionnaire group), who constituted the main subjects of this study, were drawn from these Vietnamese Catholic communities. Among the questionnaire respondents, there were a few people from Melbourne and Sydney who heard of the research project through friends and were keen to participate. These people were included in the questionnaire group but the researcher initially did not intend to recruit participants from interstate for this research. As the respondents in the study were not chosen by the use of any random sampling procedure, the results of data analysis cannot be said to represent any other group except those who actually took part in the study. The researcher makes no claim that the experiences of the participants presented in this analysis are in any sense representative of those across the whole spectrum of the Vietnamese communities in Australia or in France.

## **Participants' Groupings**

For the purpose of this study, the total questionnaire group of 400 respondents was classified into two groups, namely the Vietnamese-Australian participants and the Vietnamese-French participants, depending on the country from which they came.

### ***The Vietnamese-Australian Participants***

The 340 participants from Adelaide were divided into two different subgroups, namely the adult group coded as QAA group (Vietnamese-Australian Adults, Questionnaire group) and the group of young people aged 12-25, coded as QAY group (Young Vietnamese-Australian, Questionnaire group).

### ***The Vietnamese-French Participants***

The Vietnamese-French group consisted of 60 respondents coded as QF group (Vietnamese-French, Questionnaire group). This group was made up only of adult participants older than 25 years at the time of data analysis in 2004.

*Table 3. 2* gives a summary of all respondents in each data category from both countries, Australia and France.



*Table 3. 2 Summary of Respondents*

Country	Questionnaires	Memoirs
<b>Australia</b>	QAY group: 180	Oral memoirs: 41
	QAA group: 160	Written memoirs: 16
<b>France</b>	QF group: 60	Oral memoirs: 13
<b>Total</b>	<b>Total 400</b>	<b>Total 70</b>

## **Conclusion**

This study is based on a wide ranging set of data derived from a number of different sources, by various methods of data gathering in both Adelaide and Paris. The task of collating and presenting such a large volume of information was time-consuming and challenging. A comprehensive presentation of concrete facts that laid the foundation for the analysis of cultural facts in this study is presented in the chapter that follows.

## **Chapter 4: Concrete and Cultural Data from the Respondents**

### ***Introduction***

This study is based on two main sources of data: one set of data is qualitative, derived from cultural and concrete facts of seventy memoir contributors and twenty-five interviews with community leaders and educational authorities; the other is a set of data derived from responses to 400 questionnaires. Apart from these two main sources of data, this study also uses Census data and various kinds of documents such as newsletters and reports as sources of data as well.

The comprehensive presentation of concrete facts which provided the foundation for the cultural analysis of this study, obtained from 400 responses of the self-administered questionnaires, constitute the major part of this chapter. As each of the seventy memoir contributors also responded to the questionnaire, their concrete facts have also been included in the overall profile of the questionnaire group.

### ***Data Classification***

Based on the humanistic sociological research method (Smolicz and Secombe, 1981), the various facts derived from the memoir and questionnaire responses have been classified into two main categories: the concrete data and the cultural data.

#### **Concrete Data**

Concrete data consist of the personal facts and family background information of memoir contributors and questionnaire respondents. In order to understand and interpret the cultural data appropriately, it is important to establish such detailed concrete profiles of the respondents based on factual information provided through their responses to the questionnaires and oral or written memoirs.

#### **Cultural Data**

Cultural data are derived from memoirs and questionnaire responses which are the “expressions of the individuals’ attitudes, aspirations and generalized assessments of society at large, when taken in the context of the subjectively perceived view of their own situation and social role” (Smolicz and Secombe 1981: 25-26). This research is based on a very large volume of cultural data derived mainly from seventy memoirs,

and also from some of the questions within the four hundred questionnaire and interview commentaries. In the actual process of data analysis, it is not always possible to make a clear distinction between concrete and cultural facts, although an awareness of such a theoretical distinction may assist the researcher in understanding the cultural phenomena. The main point is that comprehensive knowledge of the subjects requires both their concrete and cultural facts. This is what Znaniecki meant when he argued that the sociological process of imaginatively reconstructing another person's experience from his/her writings or comments, involves taking into account everything that is known about that person. In other words, both sets of data played a vital role in the analysis of Vietnamese people's experiences in this study and they complement each other quite well.

### **Concrete Profiles of the Questionnaire Group**

The total questionnaire group consisted of four hundred respondents who were classified into three subgroups coded as QAA, QAY and QF, as previously explained in Chapter 3. In the analysis of concrete facts, these three subgroups are often presented separately because of the specific characteristics of each group. These three groups provided the central source of statistical data for this study. The concrete fact profiles of the questionnaire group were generated, based on factual information provided through the respondents' responses to questions related to their personal details such as gender, age, marital status, birth place, religion, occupation, education level and length of residence etc.

### **Gender and Marital Status**

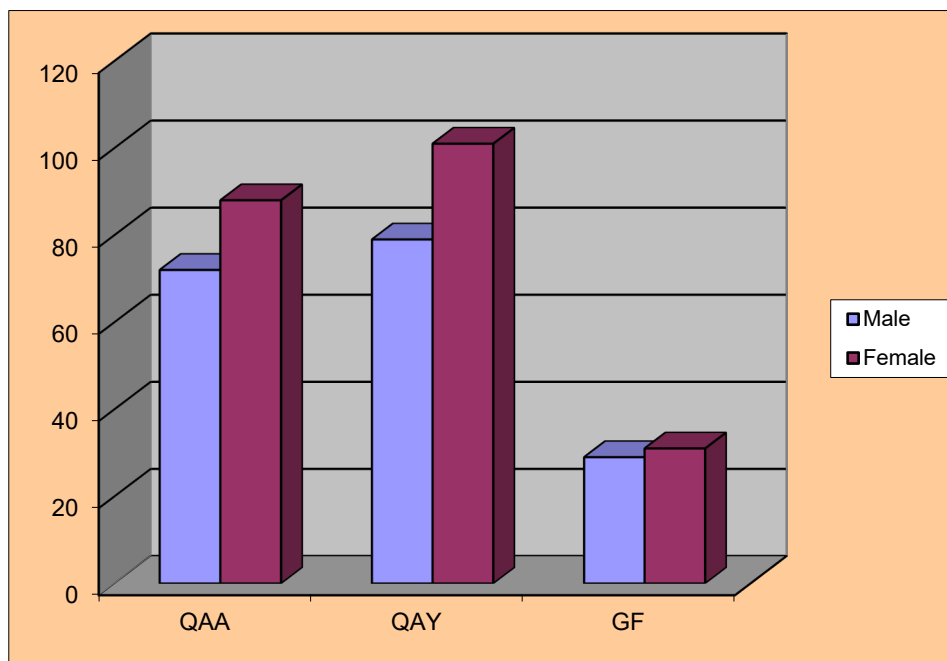
Results presented in *Table 4. 1* show that the total number of respondents consisted of 55% females and 45% males. Thus, the number of female participants was 10% larger than males. This trend was consistent in all three groups: the gender variant in the QAA group was exactly the same as in the whole group of participants (55% females and 45% males). In the QF group, the difference in the gender variable was less pronounced than the other two groups (52% females and 48% males). In the QAY group, there were 56% females and 44% males. It is interesting to note that this trend was very different from that of the general Vietnamese population in Australia at the time. In fact, the number of males in the Vietnam-born population in Australia had surpassed the number of females for many years. However, if one compares the percentage of female

participants in this study with those of the 2001 Census of Australian population, one can see that the percentage of females in both QAA group and QAY group was higher than that of the Vietnam-born population in Australia (52% females and 48% males) or that of the Vietnamese-speaking population in Australia in 2001 (51% females and 49% males) (The People of Australia, 2003: 38, 71)

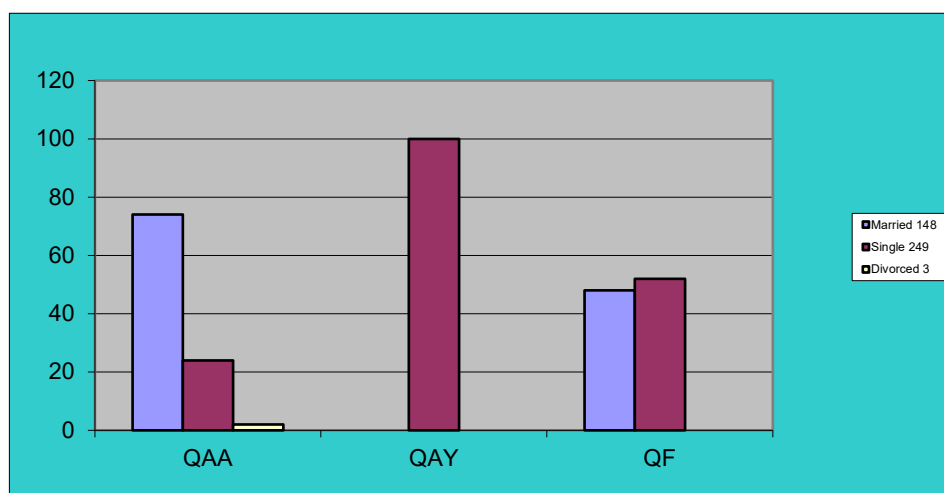
*Table 4. 1 Gender, Marital Status of All Participants*

	Male		Female		Total	Married		Single		Divorced		Total	N
	N	%	N	%	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	%	
Participants													
QAA group	72	45	88	55	100	119	74	38	24	3	2	100	160
QAY group	79	44	101	56	100	0	0	180	100	0	0	100	180
QF group	29	48	31	52	100	29	48	31	52	0	0	100	60
Total	180	45	220	55	100	148	37	249	62	3	1	100	400

*Chart 4. 1 Participants' Gender*



With regard to marital status, *Table 4.1* and *Chart 4.2* below, show that 62% of all participants were married, 37% were single and only 1% was reported to be divorced. The divorce rate was very low compared with the general population in Australia or in France at the time. The QAA group had the highest rate of married people (74%) and all the participants in the QAY group were single, as all of them were students at the time.

*Chart 4. 2 Participants' Marital Status*

## Generation and Birth Place

In the context of this investigation, the first generation of Vietnamese is defined as those who were born in Vietnam of Vietnamese parents and arrived in Australia after the age of twelve. The second generation included firstly those who were born of Vietnamese parents in the settlement countries (Australia or France); secondly, those born in refugee camps in Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and elsewhere as well as those born in Vietnam but arrived in Australia before the age of twelve. *Table 4. 2* shows that all 160 participants in the QAA group were born in Vietnam and arrived in Australia after the age of twelve. Thus, all participants of this group can be regarded as first generation Vietnamese immigrants in Australia.

As defined above, in the QAY group, 158 participants (88%) belonged to the second generation of Vietnamese in Australia. Among these second generation, 124 (69%) were born in Australia, 11 (6%) were born in other countries and 23 (13%) were born in Vietnam but arrived in Australia before the age of twelve. Only 22 (12%) participants in the QAY group belonged to the first generation of Vietnamese in Australia.

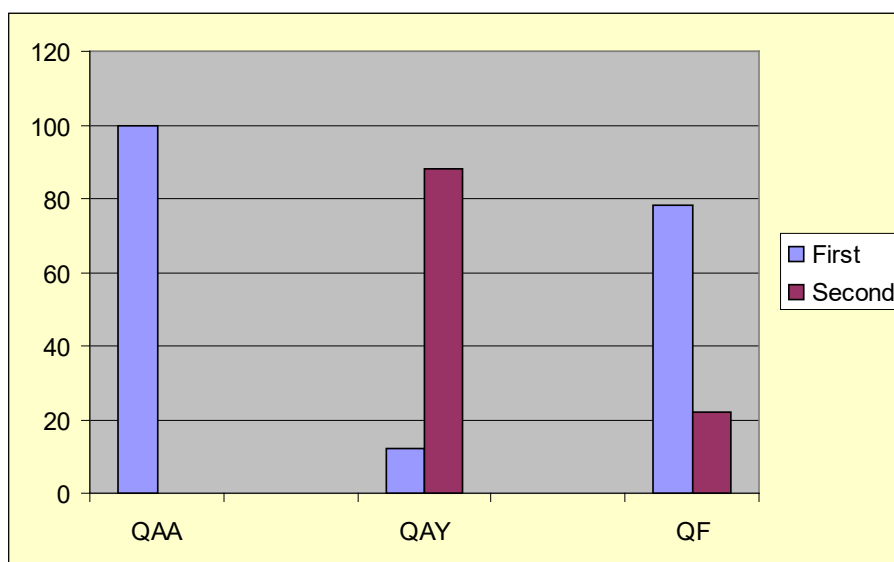
In the QF group, the Vietnamese-French group, 13 participants (22%) belonged to second generation Vietnamese. Among these second generation, only 2 (3%) were born in France, 1 (2%) was born in another country and 10 (17%) were born in Vietnam but arrived in France before the age of twelve. The majority of participants (78%) in the QF group belonged to the first generation of Vietnamese settled in France. The QAY group had the largest percentage of participants of second generation (88%) followed by

the QF group with (22%) while there was no participant among the QAA group belonging to the second generation category.

*Table 4.2 Participants' Migration Generation and Birth Place*

	Generation					Birth Place														
Respondents	First		Second		Total	Vietnam		Australia		France		Others		Total						
	N	%	N	%	%	N	%	N	%	No	%	N	%	%						
QAA group	160	100	0	0	100	160	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	100						
QAY group	22	12	158	88	100	45	25	124	69	0	0	11	6	100						
QF group	47	78	13	22	100	57	95	0	0	2	3	1	2	100						
Total	229	57	171	43	100	262	66	124	31	2	1	11	3	100						

*Chart 4. 3 Participants' Migration Generation*



With regard to birthplace, it was noted that, among 400 questionnaire respondents, there were 262 (65%) participants who were born in Vietnam, 124 (31%) born in Australia, 11 (3%) born in other countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Thailand where refugee camps for Indochinese refugees existed for a number of years but only two participants (3%) were born in France as shown in *Table 4.2*. By examining each group separately, it was noted that all 160 (100%) participants in QAA group were born in Vietnam and 57 (95%) of participants in QF group were born in Vietnam. The comparison between this research data with the Australian 2001 Census data, in relation to the “born in Vietnamese” factor, indicated that the percentage of participants born in Vietnam within the total group, was not very much different from that of the 2001 Australian Census: 65% and 68% respectively. However, the percentage of those born

in Australia, among the participants was 5% higher than that of the 2001 Australian Census: 31% and 26% respectively.

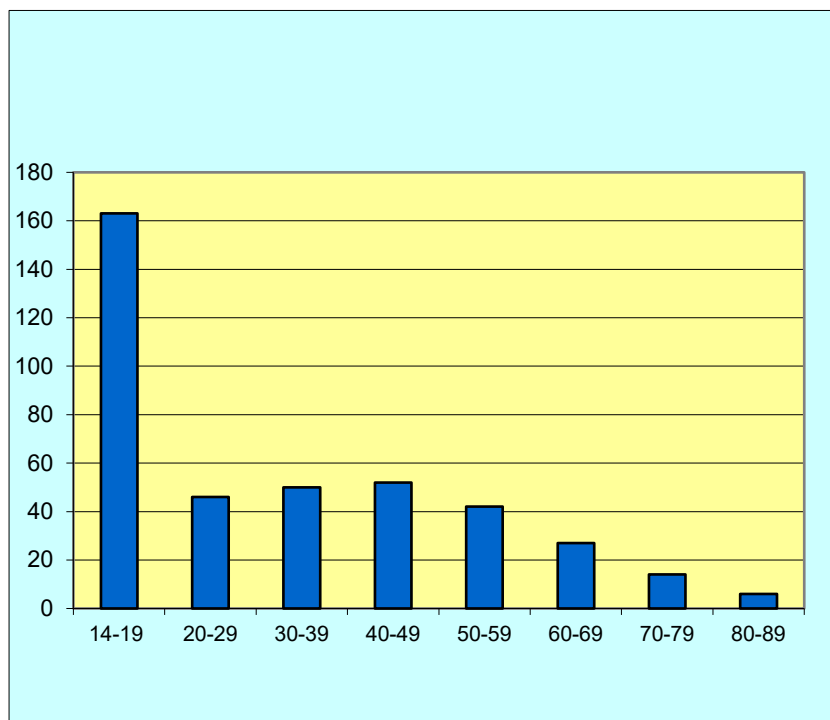
### Participants' Age Groups

There was an extensive range of ages found in the total group of 400 questionnaire respondents, with the youngest respondent being fourteen years old, and the oldest being eighty-nine years old. The participants were grouped in eight different age groups as shown in *Table 4. 3*. Both *Table 4. 3* and *Chart 4. 4* show that 41% of the participants were aged between fourteen and nineteen and all participants in this age group belonged to the QAY group. 12% of participants were over sixty and 2% of participants were between eighty and eighty-nine. Almost half of the total number of questionnaire respondents (49%) was aged between twenty and sixty. Thus, in terms of age, the majority of these participants were relatively young at the time of this research and they reflected well the age distribution chart of the general population of Vietnamese background, as reported in the 2001 Australian population Census (The People of Australia, 2003:71).

*Table 4. 3 Participants' Age Groups in 2004*

Respondents	14-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	Subtotal
QAA group	0	16	38	42	33	17	11	3	<b>160</b>
QAY group	163	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>180</b>
QF group	0	13	12	10	9	10	3	3	<b>60</b>
<b>Total Number</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>400</b>
<b>Total %</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>

The Vietnamese community in Australia is relatively young compared with other migrant communities such as the Greek community, the Italian community or the German community. The 2001 Australian Census data shows that more than 80% of the Vietnamese background population was less than 45 years old in 2001. In contrast, the QF group did not have any participant younger than twenty and its participants were spread evenly in the age groups between twenty and seventy.

*Chart 4. 4 Age Groups of All Participants Combined*

### Length of Residence

Results in relation to the "length of residence" factor from *Table 4. 4* shows that in 2004, only 17 (4%) participants had lived in the host countries for less than ten years and 142 (36%) participants had lived in the host countries between ten and fifteen years, 128 (32%) between sixteen and twenty years, 77 (19%) between twenty-one and twenty-five years and 22 (6%) participants had lived in the host countries between twenty-six and fifty-three years. It should be noted that 14 (4%) of participants in the total group did not give their arrival date which was recorded as "not stated".

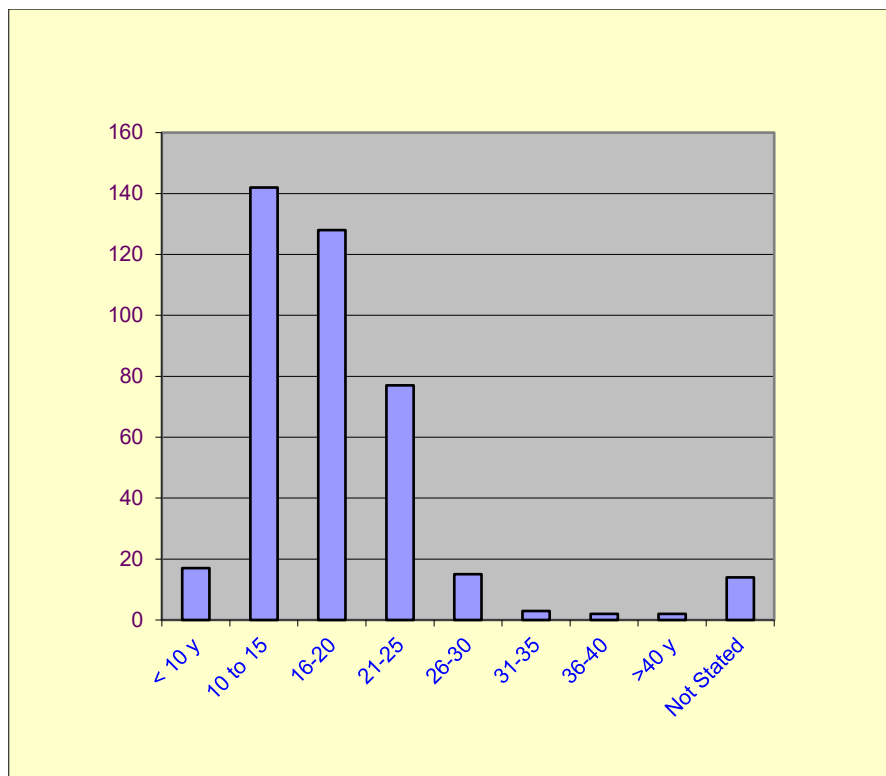
When each group was considered separately, it was noted that in the Vietnamese-French (QF) group, there was one participant who had lived in France for fifty-three years and another for forty-one years. Both were females who stated that they had arrived in France to join their husbands, who had come to Vietnam as soldiers during the French occupation of Vietnam before 1954. In the QF group, there were another six participants who had lived in France more than thirty years. They were studying in France when the fall of Saigon occurred, in April 1975. Immediately after the communists took control over Vietnam in 1975, these students sought refugee status and were allowed to stay on in France. The majority of participants in the QF group had arrived in France as refugees after the fall of Saigon in April 1975 and had lived in



France between thirteen and twenty-nine years. There was no participant in the QF group who had lived in France for less than thirteen years.

With regard to the QAA group, all participants arrived in Australia after the fall of Saigon in 1975, except for one female participant who came to Australia as a student in 1974. Thus, by 2004 this participant had lived in Australia for thirty years. The other 159 participants in the QAA group had lived in Australia for less than thirty years. The biggest number of participants (84) of the QAA group had lived in Australia between sixteen and twenty-five years and another 65 between ten and fifteen years. While only three participants of the QAA group had lived in Australia for less than ten years, eight participants in this group had lived in Australia for a long period, between twenty-six and twenty-nine years.

As described previously, the majority (69%) of those in the QAY group were born in Australia. They had lived in Australia all their lives, between fourteen and twenty years. The rest of participants in this group arrived in Australia either from Vietnam or from transit countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Hong Kong or Singapore at a very early age. Results show that 45% of participants of the QAY group had lived in Australia between sixteen and twenty years in 2004. 38% or 69 participants had lived in Australia between ten and fifteen years. 8% or 14 participants had lived in Australia for less than ten years. It should be noted that 7% or 12 participants in this group did not state their arrival dates in their responses. *Chart 4.5* shows the spread among the total group of participants with regard to the length of residence factor. There was a high majority of participants (87%) who had lived in the host country between ten and twenty-five years, a small number of participants (4%) who had lived in the host country for less than ten years and also a relatively small number (9%) of those who had lived in the host country for more than twenty-five years.

**Chart 4. 5 Length of Residence in Settlement Countries in 2004 for All Participants**

### ***Reasons of Passage to Settlement Countries (Australia or France)***

Apart from those participants (32%) who were born in Australia or in France, the majority of participants came to the host country namely France or Australia as the consequence of the American war in Vietnam. They came to these two countries as refugees (category i) or under the family reunion scheme (category ii). **Table 4.4** and **Chart 4.6** below, show that 136 (34%) of the total number of participants came to the host country as refugees, 110 (27%) participants came under the family reunion scheme. Only 10 (3%) participants came as students to study in the host country. It should be noted that 15 (4%) participants in the total group did not state the reasons of their passage to the host country.

The QAA group had the highest number of participants (61%) of category (i) who came to Australia between 1974 and 1997, with the biggest number arriving from 1980 to 1985. This reflects the general wave of Indochinese refugees from refugee camps in South East Asia to countries of settlement at the same period. In the QAA group, 36% of participants in QAA group came to Australia under the family reunion scheme, with the majority arriving between 1989 and 1993, when the Australian government gave priority to orderly departures from Vietnam under the family reunion scheme, as part of its commitment to resolve the Indochinese refugee crisis at the time. Many Vietnamese

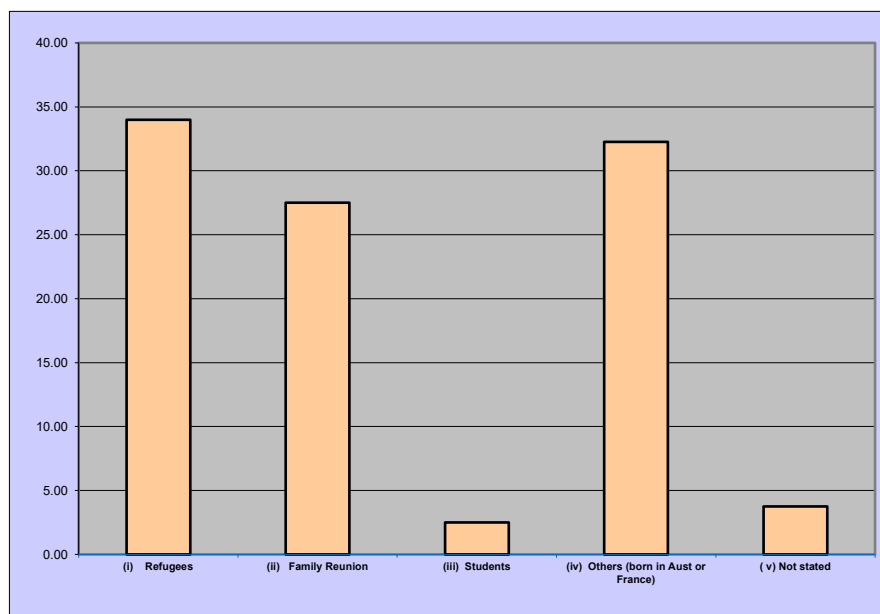
families in Australia also sponsored their elderly parents from Vietnam to Australia during this period.

The QF group had 40% of participants who came to France as refugees and 37% who came under the family reunion scheme. The comparison of results between the QAA group and QF group, in relation to the “reasons of passage” factor, indicates that both of these groups had the same rate of participants in the category (ii) but QAA group had 21% more participants belonging to category (i) than QF group. The majority of those born in the host country derived from QAY group, namely born in Australia, as only two participants in the QF group were born in France.

*Table 4. 4 Reasons of Passage to Settlement Countries for All Participants*

<b>Categories</b>	<b>QAA</b>		<b>QAY</b>		<b>QF</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>(i) Refugees</b>	98	61	14	8	24	40	136	<b>34</b>
<b>(ii) Family Reunion</b>	57	36	31	17	22	37	110	<b>28</b>
<b>(iii) Students</b>	3	2	3	2	4	7	10	<b>3</b>
<b>(iv) Others (born in Aust or France)</b>	2	1	125	69	2	3	129	<b>32</b>
<b>(v) Not stated</b>	0	0	7	4	8	13	15	<b>4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

*Chart 4. 6 Reasons of Passage to Settlement Countries for All Participants*



## Citizenship

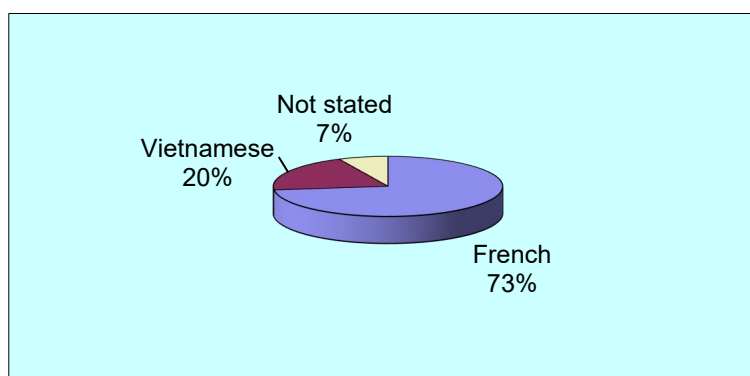
The results show that the percentage of Vietnamese people who became citizens of the host countries was very high both in Australia and in France. As shown in *Table 4.5 and Chart 4.7* below, 73% of participants in the Vietnamese-French (QF group) had French

citizenship, while only 20% had not yet taken up French citizenship by 2004. It should be noted that four participants (7%) in the QF group did not respond to this question.

**Table 4.5. Vietnamese-French Group by Citizenship**

Respondents	French		Vietnamese		Not stated		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	%
QF group	44	73	12	20	4	7	100

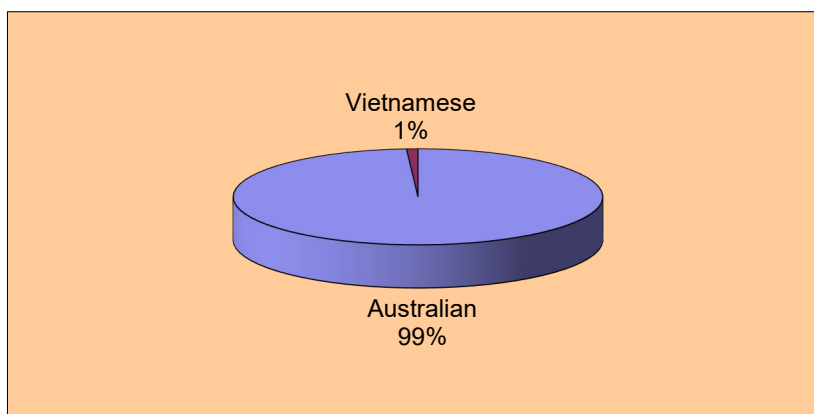
**Chart 4. 7 Vietnamese-French Group by Citizenship**



In relation to the citizenship factor, the comparison between the Vietnamese-French group and the Vietnamese-Australian group shows that the percentage of those who had citizenship of the host country, at the time of the interview, was 26 % higher in Australia than in France (see *Table 4. 5 and Table 4. 6*). This might be due to the fact that it was harder for Vietnamese people to acquire French citizenship than to obtain Australian citizenship. Up to 2004 when this research was conducted, there was no requirement for migrants to pass any English test in order to become Australian citizens whereas in other countries such as USA, migrants have had to pass an English test as condition of being granted US citizenship. Thus, many elderly Vietnamese-Americans found this requirement very difficult to fulfill because they did not speak English and that they were too old to learn a new language. It was noted that only five Vietnamese-Australian participants (1%) in the QAA group reported as having Vietnamese citizenship. These five participants had been in Australia for only a short period of time. All the remaining 99% of respondents from this QAA group were Australian citizens. This is consistent with the 2001 Census data which show that the Vietnamese community in Australia has a very high rate of citizenship within a relatively short period of residence in the country (see *Table 4.6 and Chart 4.8 below*).

*Table 4.6 Vietnamese-Australian Group by Citizenship*

Respondents	Australian		Vietnamese		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
QAA group	155	97	5	3	160	100
QAY group	180	100	0	0	180	100
Total	335	99	5	1	340	100

*Chart 4. 8 Vietnamese-Australian Group by Citizenship*

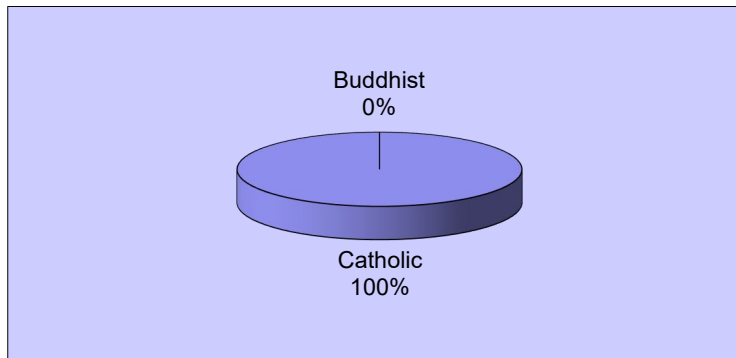
It appears that Vietnamese people have been very keen to take up citizenship of the host country. They usually applied for citizenship as soon as possible for them to do so. This is understandable as most of them had come to the host country as refugees. By taking up citizenship of the host country such as Australia or France, they had the rights and protection of that country, especially when travelling overseas. It was also a sign of their commitment to the host country, as any other citizen of the nation.

## Religion

As previously explained, the focus of this research is on the Vietnamese Catholic communities in France and in Australia. As reported earlier in Chapter Three, almost all the respondents of the questionnaires group came from these two Catholic communities. Thus, it was to be expected that the percentage of Catholics among the participants would be very high. In fact, in the Vietnamese-French (QF group), all the participants (100%) reported being Catholic, as shown in *Table 4.7* and *Chart 4.9* below.

*Table 4. 7 Vietnamese-French Group by Religion*

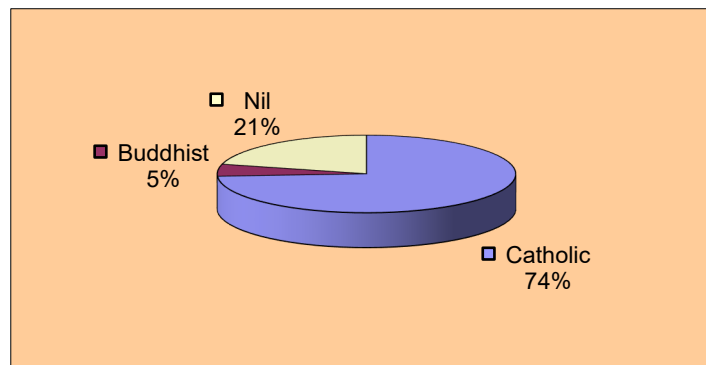
	<i>Catholic</i>		<i>Buddhist</i>		<i>Nil</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>QF Group</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

*Chart 4. 9 Vietnamese-French Group by Religion*

The religion factor in the Vietnamese-Australian group of respondents was rather different. *Table 4.8* and *Chart 4.10* show that 252 (74%) participants reported being Catholic, 17 (5%) participants Buddhist, and a relatively high percentage (21% or 71 participants) reported that they did not belong to any religious community.

*Table 4. 8 Vietnamese-Australian Group by Religion*

<b>Respondents</b>	<i>Catholic</i>		<i>Buddhist</i>		<i>Nil</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>QAA group</b>	153	96	0	0	6	4	160	<b>100</b>
<b>QAY group</b>	99	55	16	9	65	36	180	<b>100</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>100</b>

*Chart 4.10 Vietnamese-Australian Group by Religion*

It is interesting to note that almost all of those who reported having no religion derived from the QAY group, the young Vietnamese-Australians aged between fourteen and twenty-five. It would appear that religion was not as relevant to this group as it was to

their parents. The comparison between the Vietnamese-French group and the Vietnamese-Australian group, in relation to the religion factor, show that the percentage of Catholics among the Vietnamese-French QF group was 26% higher than that of the Vietnamese-Australian group. This can be explained by the fact that the Vietnamese-French QF group consisted mainly of adults derived from the Vietnamese Catholic community in Paris. It should be noted that, in South Australia in 2004, there were approximately 3500 practising Vietnamese Catholics which represented approximately 25% of the Vietnamese population in South Australia and a similar number of people constituted the Vietnamese Catholic community in Paris at the time.

## Occupation

With regard to the occupation factor, the researcher chose to consider occupations by gender of QF group and QAA group separately looking at the participants' occupations in Vietnam and their occupations in the host countries, namely France and Australia. The occupational situation of the two groups was then compared to each other.

### Occupations of the Vietnamese-Australian Groups

Although all participants in the QAY group were students in 2004, they were included in the overall occupational picture of the Vietnamese-Australian group.

*Table 4. 9 Occupations by Gender (QAA & QAY Groups) in Australia*

Occupations	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Professional	22	6	26	8	48	14
Self-employed	11	3	8	2	19	6
Skilled worker	5	1	2	1	7	2
Unskilled worker	16	5	13	4	29	9
Clerical	0	0	2	1	2	1
Public Service	2	1	2	1	4	1
Soldier	0	0	0	0	0	0
Farmer	2	1	1	0	3	1
Fisherman	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student	77	23	105	31	182	54
Home Duties	2	1	8	2	10	3
Retired	7	2	12	4	19	6
Unemployed	6	2	10	3	16	5
Not stated	1	0	0	0	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>100</b>

As expected, the percentage of students in the two groups (QAA and QAY) combined was very high (54%) as all 180 participants in the QAY were students in 2004 and another two participants in the QAA group were students as shown in *Table 4. 9*.

The percentage of the Vietnamese-Australian group in the professional category was relatively high (14%), compared with that of the general Vietnamese population at the time. In addition, only 5% reported as unemployed, which was very different from the unemployment rate (around 25-35%) in the Vietnamese community in Australia in the years immediately after their arrival (ABS, 1986).

An examination of the results of *Table 4.10* or *Charts 4.11&4.12* below shows a considerable change in all occupation categories among the participants of QAA group when they were in Vietnam as compared to their occupational situation in Australia in 2004. A moderate percentage (39%) of participants in this group were students in Vietnam before they arrived in Australia. As expected, many participants in this group had completed their studies in Australia and consequently moved to the professional category. This explains the high percentage (30%) in the professional category of the QAA group in Australia. It was 12% higher than the rate of the same professional category in Vietnam (*see Table 4.10*). One would expect a downward social mobility in the general Vietnamese migrant community but in this instance the opposite situation had occurred, due to the particular characteristic of this group of participants. It is interesting to note that the number of females as compared to males in the professional category when they were in Vietnam was almost equal (15 males & 14 females) but in Australia the number of females in the professional category was even higher than males in the same category (22 males & 26 females). This may be attributed to the fact that in this group of participants, there was a substantial number of female teachers; when they came to South Australia, they were able to have their teaching qualifications recognised. After completing the bridging courses in the late 1980's, many of them took up teaching positions in South Australian schools. Thus, their professional status did not change. *Table 4.10* also shows a considerable shift in the unskilled category: 5% in Vietnam increased to 18% in Australia.

Results of *Table 4.10* shows no participant reported being unemployed in Vietnam but in Australia 10% of participants in the QAA group was reported as unemployed. This unemployment rate was similar to the unemployment rate in South Australia in 2004 but was much lower compared with that of the general Vietnamese population in Australia in the previous years (ABS, 1986). Thus, the QAA group shows clear evidence of positive change with respect to employment in the Vietnamese community in Australia. It should also be noted that in this group, the self-employed category has increased from

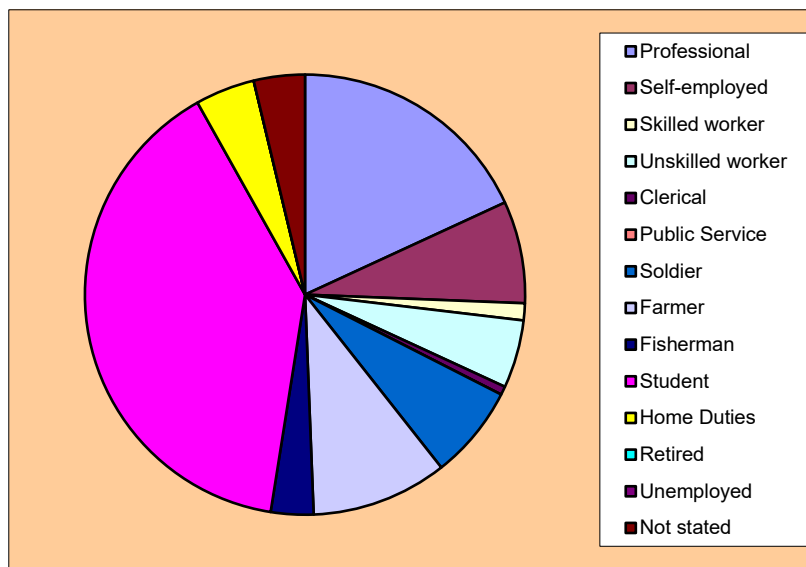


8% in Vietnam to 12% in Australia. Viviani's (1990) study on Vietnamese social mobility showed that many Vietnamese immigrants living in capital cities such as Sydney, opened pharmacies, restaurants and clothing factories, once they established themselves in those cities. Thus, the self-employed trend in this group of participants reflects the general employment situation of the Vietnamese community in Australia in this respect. The QAA group also shows a substantial change in the unskilled worker category (5% in Vietnam as against 18% in Australia). This can be explained by the fact that many Vietnamese immigrants, who arrived in Australia, because of their lack of English, had to accept any kind of job and most of such jobs were found in the unskilled and low pay work category. This situation happened not only to the Vietnamese community but also was common to other migrant communities among people of first generation migrants. *Table 4.10* shows no participants reported as retired when they were in Vietnam but in Australia, sixteen participants (12%) reported as retired by 2004. There were eleven participants reported as soldiers and five reported as fisherman in Vietnam but on arrival in Australia, no one continued in these occupational categories. For further information, refer to *Table 4. 10* and *Charts 4. 11 & 4. 12* below.

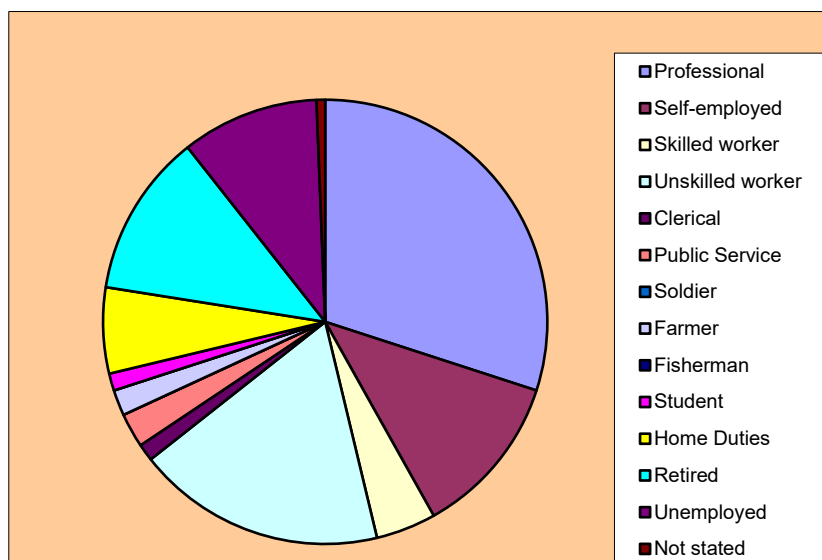
*Table 4. 10 Occupations by Gender of QAA Group (N=160)*

Occupations	In Australia						In Vietnam					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	No	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Professional	22	14	26	16	48	30	15	9	14	9	29	18
Self-employed	11	7	8	5	19	12	1	1	11	7	12	8
Skilled worker	5	3	2	1	7	4	1	1	1	1	2	1
Unskilled worker	16	10	13	8	29	18	2	1	6	4	8	5
Clerical	0	0	2	1	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	1
Public Service	2	1	2	1	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Soldier	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	7	0	0	11	7
Farmer	2	1	1	1	3	2	6	4	10	6	16	10
Fisherman	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	1	1	5	3
Student	2	1	0	0	2	1	28	18	35	22	63	39
Home Duties	2	1	8	5	10	6	1	1	6	4	7	4
Retired	7	4	12	8	19	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unemployed	6	4	10	6	16	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not stated	1	1	0	0	1	1	3	2	3	2	6	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>

*Chart 4. 11 Occupations - QAA Group in Vietnam (N=160)*



*Chart 4. 12 Occupations - QAA Group in Australia (N=160)*



### **Occupations of the Vietnamese-French Participants (QF Group)**

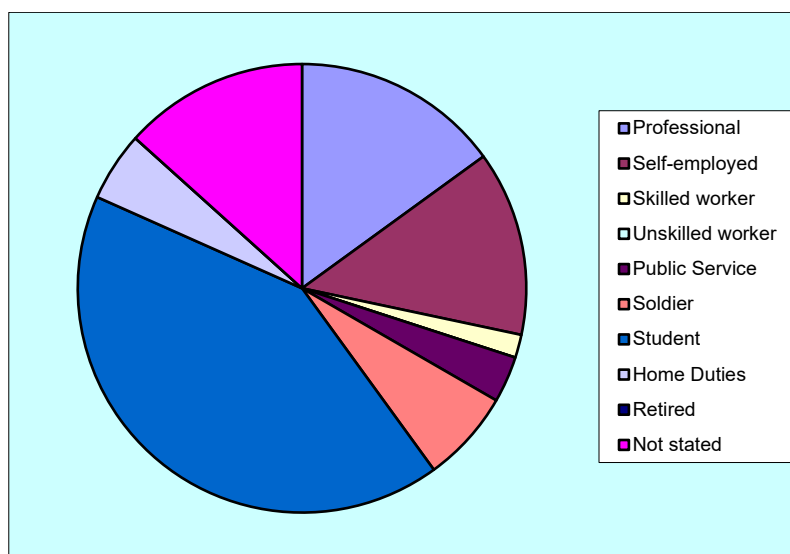
By examining the results in *Table 4.11* below, one can see clear changes in all occupation categories among the participants of QF group, from when they were in Vietnam as compared to their occupational situation in France in 2004. This table shows that the QF group had a very high percentage (42%) of participants in the student category in Vietnam before they arrived in France. Many of these students would have completed their studies in France and consequently had moved to the professional category at the time of this research. This explains why the professional category rate of QF group in France increased by 28% compared to that in Vietnam. *Table 4.11* also shows a very high percentage in the self-employed category in France (22%), even higher than that in the QAA group in Australia. It is interesting to note that no participant reported as

unemployed in France or in Vietnam in the QF group at the time. This is perhaps due to the limited number of participants in this group. For further information, refer to *Table 4.11* and *Charts 4.13* & *4.14* below.

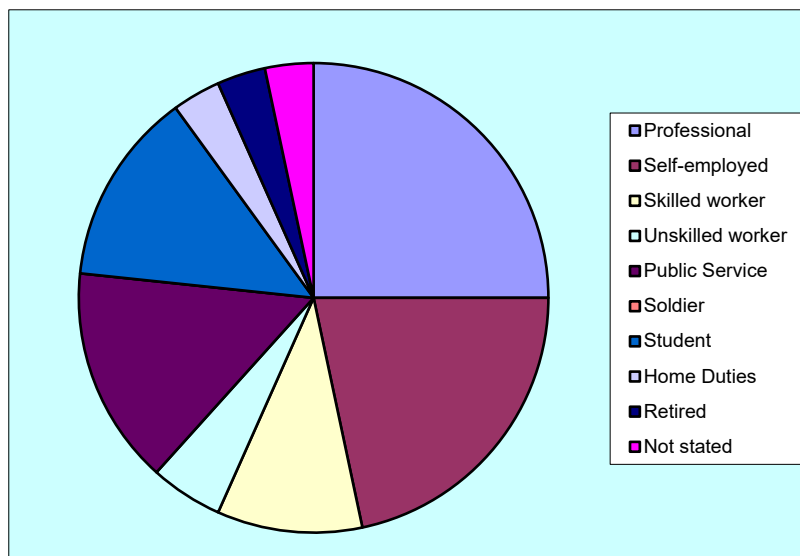
*Table 4.11 Occupations by Gender of QF Group (N = 60)*

Occupations	In Vietnam						In France					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Professional	5	8	4	7	9	15	7	12	8	13	15	25
Self-employed	2	3	6	10	8	13	7	12	6	10	13	22
Skilled worker	1	2	0	0	1	2	5	8	1	2	6	10
Unskilled worker	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	3	3	5
Public Service	2	3	0	0	2	3	6	10	3	5	9	15
Soldier	4	7	0	0	4	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student	9	15	16	27	25	42	3	5	5	8	8	13
Home Duties	0	0	3	5	3	5	0	0	2	3	2	3
Retired	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	2	3
Not stated	6	10	2	3	8	13	1	2	1	2	2	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

*Chart 4.13 Occupations of QF Group in Vietnam (N = 60)*



*Chart 4. 14 Occupations of QF Group in France (N= 60)*



In comparing QAA group with QF group, as shown in *Table 4.12* below, one can see some similarities and differences in the occupation factor.

*Table 4. 12 Occupations in Settlement Countries by Gender - QF Group Compared to QAA Group*

Occupations	QAA group in Australia						QF group in France					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Professional	22	14	26	16	48	30	7	12	8	13	15	25
Self-employed	11	7	8	5	19	12	7	12	6	10	13	22
Skilled worker	5	3	2	1	7	4	5	8	1	2	6	10
Unskilled worker	16	10	13	8	29	18	1	2	2	3	3	5
Clerical	0	0	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Public Service	2	1	2	1	4	3	6	10	3	5	9	15
Farmer	2	1	1	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student	2	1	0	0	2	1	3	5	5	8	8	13
Home Duties	2	1	8	5	10	6	0	0	2	3	2	3
Retired	7	4	12	8	19	12	2	3	0	0	2	3
unemployed	6	4	10	6	16	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not stated	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

Firstly, both groups had a very high percentage in the student category in Vietnam (42% for QF and 39% for QAA). It is assumed that this group of students continued their studies when they arrived in the host countries and that many of them had become professionals by 2004 in France or Australia. Thus, they have helped to boost the rates of the professional category considerably in both groups (30% for QAA in Australia and 25% for QF in France). These rates are very high compared to those of the general Vietnamese population in France and in Australia at the time. Similarly, no participant in the QF group reported as retired when they were in Vietnam, but in France by 2004 there were two participants (3%) reported as retired, while nineteen participants (12%) in QAA group reported as retired in Australia in 2004. It should be noted that the rate

of self-employed category from QF group was almost double that of the QAA group at the time (22% for QF and 12% for QAA). While trying to highlight some similarities and differences between the QF and QAA groups, the researcher is fully aware of the fact that it is not always possible to make a comparison between these two groups as the total number of participants in each group is different from each other, (60 in QF and 160 in QAA group).

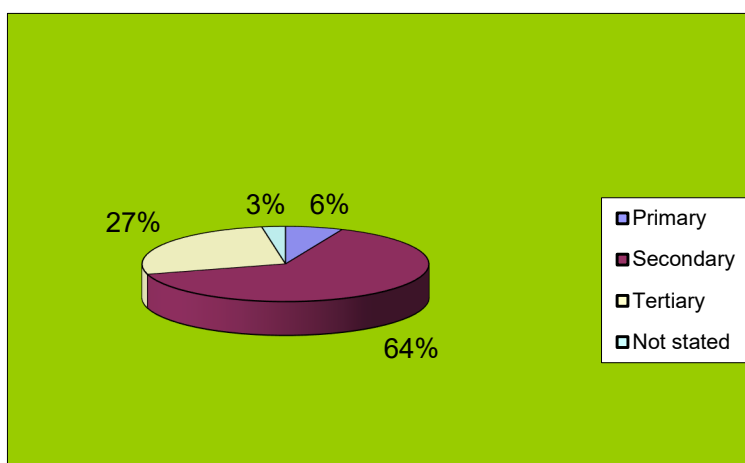
## Educational Level

By examining results of the education level factor in the Vietnamese-Australian group as presented in *Table 4.13* and *Chart 4.15*, one can see that the majority of participants of this group were well educated. Almost 50% of participants in the QAA group reported as having a tertiary level of education. This also explains why this group scored such a high rate (30%) in the professional occupation category. *Table 4.13* also shows that 40% of participants in the QAA group reported as having completed secondary education and only 8 % reported as having primary education level.

*Table 4.13 Educational Level - Vietnamese-Australian Respondents*

Respondents	Primary		Secondary		Tertiary		Not Stated		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>QAA group</b>	12	8	63	39	76	48	9	6	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>QAY group</b>	10	6	154	86	16	9	0	0	<b>180</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>100</b>

*Chart 4.15 Education Level – Vietnamese-Australian Respondents*

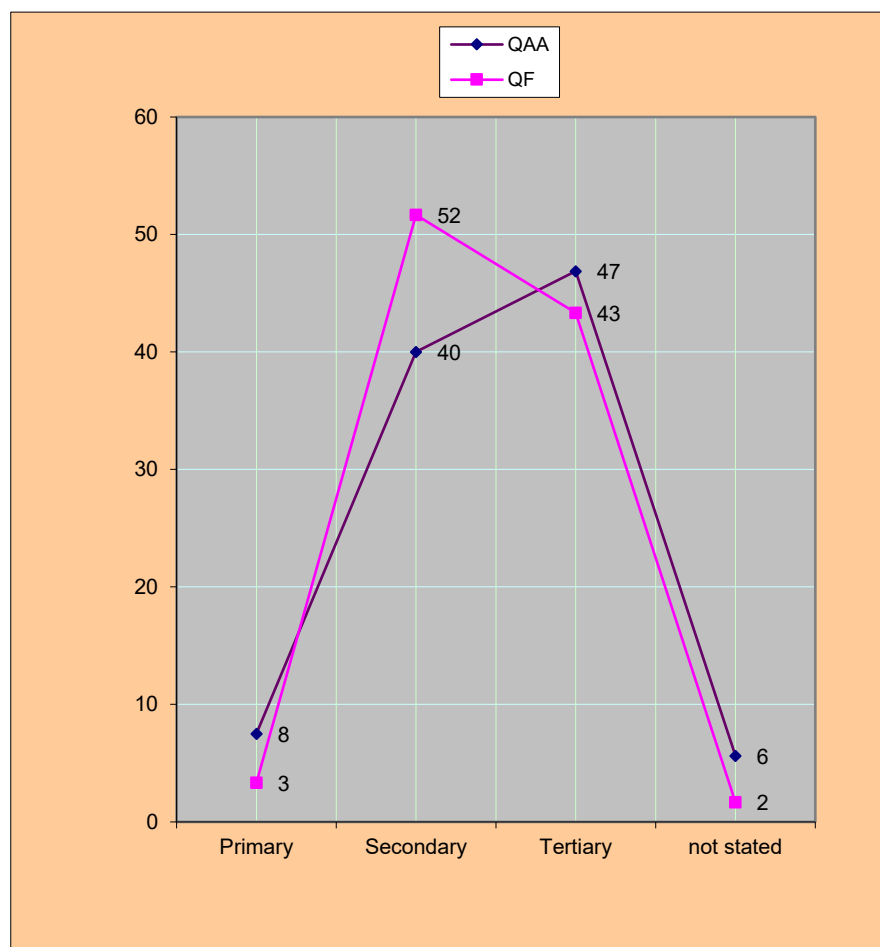


All participants in the QAY group were students in 2004. As shown in *Table 4.13*, 86% of participants from the QAY group were completing secondary education in 2004, with the biggest numbers in Year 9 and Year 10. There were ten participants (6%) at primary level, and sixteen participants (9%) were studying at university at the time.

The combination of the QAA group and the QAY group resulted in a very high percentage (64%) at secondary level and a relatively high percentage (27%) of those who were studying at tertiary level at the time.

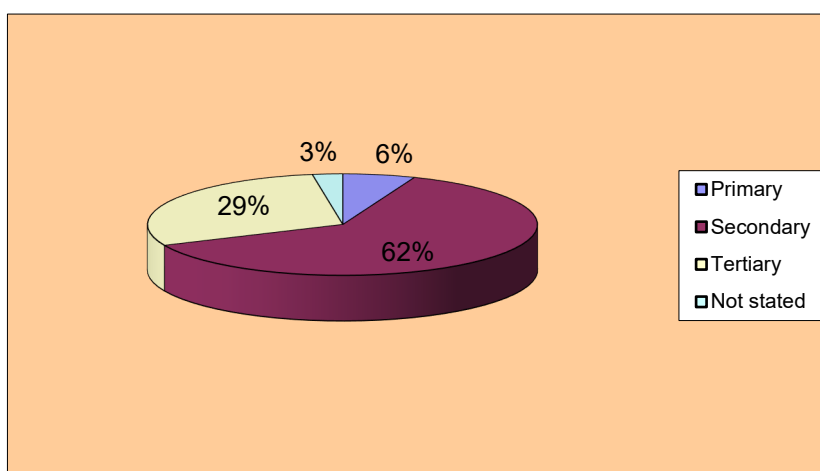
A comparison of education levels in the QAA group and the QF group presented in *Chart 4.16* shows that the QF group had a slightly lower proportion of participants (43%) reported as having tertiary education than the QAA group (47%) but these rates were still exceptionally high compared with that of the general Vietnamese population in France or in Australia at the time. On the other hand, the QF group had a higher proportion of participants with secondary education level (52%) compared to the QAA group (40%). It should also be noted that nine participants in the QAA group did not state their education level whereas only one participant in the QF group did not do so. For further information, refer to *Table 4.14* and *Charts 4.16 & 4.17* below.

**Chart 4. 16 Education Level – QF Group Compared to QAA Group**



*Table 4. 14 Education Level of All Participants*

	Primary		Secondary		Tertiary		Not Stated		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Respondents</b>										
<b>QAA group</b>	12	8	64	40	75	47	9	6	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>QAY group</b>	10	6	154	86	16	9	0	0	<b>180</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>QF group</b>	2	6	31	52	26	43	1	2	<b>60</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>99.6</b>

*Chart 4. 17 Education Level of All Participants*

### Concrete Data from Memoirs

In the preceding sections of this chapter, the researcher has presented an overall picture of the questionnaire group based on concrete facts provided through the responses to the questionnaire in the form of non-evaluative information. The statistical data referred to objective information concerning individuals' birth place, socio-economic background, educational attainment and occupation etc. The main application of the concrete data in this study was for a better and more complete understanding of cultural information. In other words, the concrete data provided the factual framework for the interpretation and analysis of information on cultural experience provided by fifty-four oral memoirs and sixteen written memoirs as well as other related materials collected through other methods of research as previously described. It should be noted that each of the sixty memoir contributors also responded to the questionnaire so the memoir contributors themselves were part of the questionnaire group. Sixteen written memoir contributors were from the QAY group; oral memoirs (1-13) were from the QF group; oral memoirs (14-22) were from the QAY group and oral memoirs (23-54) were from the QAA group. Therefore, the concrete facts from these memoir contributors have already been included in the formation of the concrete fact profile of the questionnaire group as a whole. However, a concrete profile summary for each oral and written memoir contributor is included in the Appendices section. (See Appendices 8, 9 &10)

## **Conclusion**

Concrete facts are important as they help the researcher to understand and interpret the cultural facts better but this investigation centers on the cultural facts or cultural data which refer to the respondents' assessment of their own and other people's actions and experiences. Cultural data also refers to attitudes and opinions expressed in their memoirs and interview commentaries. It is the cultural facts provided by the respondents which reveal for instance, their attitudes towards the Vietnamese language, its maintenance in the host country and its transmission to the second generation. It is the cultural facts, therefore, which illuminate the whole evaluative aspect of Vietnamese language and cultural maintenance in this study. The volume of cultural data derived from sixty memoirs, four hundred questionnaire responses and interview commentaries for this research is very large. The analysis of cultural facts was discussed on three distinct areas of Vietnamese culture: language, patterns of family life and community organisations, as these systems of cultural values were activated by the participants of Vietnamese origin in the contexts of Australia and France. This sort of analysis is able to identify not only the personal cultural systems of the respondents in these three areas of culture but also their attitudes toward them, that is, what they thought and felt about maintaining these aspects of their Vietnamese cultural heritage in the context of their host society.

However, before proceeding to the cultural fact analyses to be found in Chapters 6 to 9, the researcher presents in Chapter 5, a detailed account of the opportunities for learning Vietnamese in the education systems of France and Australia. These facts on Vietnamese programs available, and the number of students enrolled, can be taken as an indication of the extent to which each of the host societies was prepared to support the maintenance of Vietnamese language and culture of the Vietnamese immigrant families, as discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.



### **SECTION III: VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE EDUCATION, MAINTENANCE AND TRANSMISSION**

## **Chapter 5: Vietnamese Language Education in Australia and in France**

### **Introduction**

The maintenance of Vietnamese culture among members of a Vietnamese immigrant community depends not only on the willingness of individuals and families in the group to activate their own cultural values but also the readiness of the host society to respond positively to the presence of Vietnamese living in their midst.

There were many factors affecting the maintenance of the Vietnamese language in host countries such as France or Australia but the two most important ones were the availability of the Vietnamese language programs for Vietnamese children and young adults to learn and how effectively these programs were taught, as well as a complementary third factor- the willingness and positive attitudes of the learners. In this chapter, the researcher provides a summary of information she has assembled about the teaching and learning of Vietnamese in Australia and in France. She also discusses the place of Vietnamese in the language policies of the two countries, as well as its social status and academic standing.

### **Vietnamese Teaching and Learning in Australia**

In the following section, the researcher reviews Vietnamese teaching programs in the Australian education systems from primary to tertiary level, and assesses their contribution to the maintenance of the Vietnamese language for future generations of Vietnamese in Australia. She begins by documenting the historical background of the early teaching of Vietnamese through the 1980s and 1990s and proceeds to give a detailed account of the situation revealed by the language education statistics for 2000-2005 when the research data were being collected. The data for the mainstream school systems were considered before a discussion of the complementary ethnic school sector. The figures for Vietnamese across Australia as a whole were presented before a more detailed analysis of the learning opportunities for Vietnamese in South Australia, where all the research participants resided.

## Primary and Secondary Levels

At the time of this research there were approximately 152 community languages being spoken among different communities in Australia (ESA, Annual Reports 2000-2005). Sixty-nine languages were being taught at primary and secondary level through three different education systems namely: state schools (organized and funded by state governments), private schools (Catholic and independent schools) and ethnic schools (established by ethnic communities with some funding support from state and federal governments). Although there were variations from state to state, out of these sixty-nine languages, only nine were commonly taught in mainstream schools during school hours, the others were taught in ethnic schools on weekends (Saturdays and Sundays) or after school hours. *The National Policy on Languages* (Lo Bianco, 1987) set the priority languages and recommended the nine key languages for wider teaching in Australia, which were Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Indonesian/Malay, Italian, Japanese, Modern Greek and Spanish. Vietnamese was not on the priority language list but it was later recognised by the National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia as a key community language, because it was one of the best maintained intergenerationally (Nguyễn Xuân Thu, 1995). According to the latest Australia's Multicultural Policy (2011), the number of languages spoken in Australia was over 260, a considerable increase compared with that of 1995. The recently introduced Australian National Curriculum for students in all states from Reception to Year 10 includes Vietnamese among the eleven languages which has a curriculum (ACARA, 2014).

## Enrolments

At the time of this research, there were strong Vietnamese language teaching programs from primary to tertiary level in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. Phan Văn Giưỡng (1999) reported that there was a total of 28,153 students studying Vietnamese in Australia in 1999 (19,449 in primary schools and 8,704 in secondary schools) as shown in *Table 5.1* below. In 1999 Vietnamese programs were only available in four states (NSW, VIC, SA and QLD). There was no student studying Vietnamese in Tasmania (TAS), Northern Territory (NT) and Western Australia (WA) at the time. Victoria had the largest number of students (13,385) followed by New South Wales, then South Australia. Queensland had only 90 students, all studying Vietnamese at primary level in 1999. (*Table 5.1*)

**Table 5.1 Vietnamese Enrolments in Australian Schools 1999**

Schools	NSW	VIC	SA	QLD	Total
Primary	7,690	9,155	2,514	90	19,449
Secondary	3,104	4,230	1,470	0	8,704
Total	10,794	13,385	3,984	90	28,153

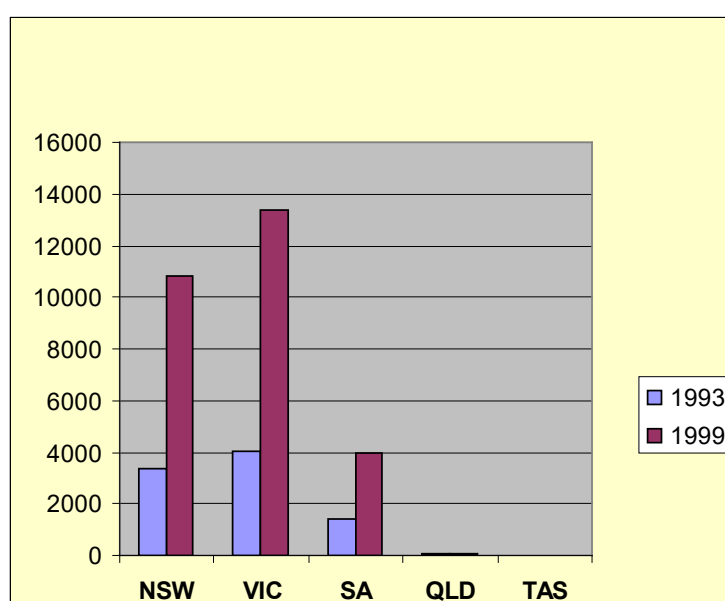
Source: Phan Văn Giưỡng 1999

**Table 5.2** below shows that six years earlier, the numbers studying Vietnamese were much lower. Only 4,051 students were studying Vietnamese in primary schools in five states of Australia: 1,675 in New South Wales, 1,170 in Victoria, 1,146 in South Australia, but there were only 37 students in Queensland and 23 in Tasmania. **Table 5.2** also shows that at secondary level, there were 4,758 students enrolled in Vietnamese in three states of Australia: 1,675 in New South Wales, 2844 in Victoria but only 239 in South Australia. There were no secondary students studying Vietnamese in the other states.

**Table 5. 2 Vietnamese Enrolments in Australian Schools 1993**

Schools	NSW	VIC	SA	QLD	TAS	Total
Primary	1,675	1,170	1,146	37	23	4,051
Secondary	1,675	2,844	239	-	-	4,758
Total	3,350	4,014	1,385	37	23	8,809

Source: (Nguyễn Xuân -Thu, 1995 pp.19-20)

**Chart 5. 1 Vietnamese Enrolments in Australian Schools 1993&1999**

Source: (Figures from Tables 5.1&5.2 above)

The comparison of statistics for 1993 and 1999 shows that the number of students studying Vietnamese in secondary and primary schools in Australia increased over three

times, over a period of six years, as shown in *Chart 5.1* above. The increase in Vietnamese enrolments at primary level was close to five-fold while the enrolments at secondary level almost doubled during this six years period. South Australia had the highest rate of increase in secondary enrolments (from 239 students in 1993 to 1,470 students in 1999). However, the national trend of Vietnamese enrolments did not continue upward after 1999, but instead started to decline gradually from the year 2000 in mainstream school programs in all the states where the language was taught. The reasons for the decline could be that firstly, because Vietnamese was not considered an important trade language for Australia at the time. Therefore, mainstream schools were not given the funding to promote Vietnamese in the same way as Chinese and Japanese, and secondly, it was easier for mainstream schools to leave it to the ethnic schools to offer Vietnamese. Thus, the only sector in which enrolments for Vietnamese increased was the ethnic school sector.

### **Senior Secondary Level**

In the early years of the 1980's, the Vietnamese communities in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia set up Vietnamese Parents' Groups, Teachers' Associations and formed lobby groups to write syllabus and submissions for Vietnamese courses at examination boards, education departments and tertiary institutions. As a result, Vietnamese was accepted as a Year 12 public examination subject in these three states. The first public examination of Year 12 Vietnamese in South Australia took place in 1980 under the Public Examination Board (PEB) of South Australia. This Board was later replaced by the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia (SSABSA), then in recent times it became the SACE Board of South Australia. Vietnamese was accepted as a subject for High School Certificate in New South Wales (HSC) and the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) in the mid 1980's. Since then, the Vietnamese language has been taught as a subject in the final year of secondary school and throughout all year levels in a number of State and Catholic schools in these states.

The statistics displayed in *Tables 5.3* and *5.4* below, show that the number of students who completed Vietnamese as part of the Year 12 Certificate, reached a peak in 1993 with 1,262 students, then a gradual downward trend occurred from 2000 onwards in all three states. The number of students sitting for the Year 12 Vietnamese public examination reduced by 60% nationally from 1993 to 2004. New South Wales had the

highest reduction rate (76%) followed by South Australia (70%). Victoria had the lowest decline rate of enrolments (45%) during this period of eleven years. A Vietnamese program at Year 12 level was only introduced in Queensland in 1999. It was a small program with less than one hundred students sitting for the examination each year. As with other states, enrolments in Vietnamese at Year 12 level in Queensland have gradually declined. However, enrolment figures for 2005 (*Table 5.4*) show that the enrolment numbers have slowly picked up again in all four states. This was probably due to the increased number of overseas students from Vietnam enrolling in the subject in recent times.

**Table 5. 3 Students Completing Year 12 Vietnamese in Australia, 1988 - 1993**

States	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
New South Wales	N/A	267	253	253	321	442
Victoria	232	324	351	384	429	623
South Australia	126	142	128	173	185	197
<b>Total</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>935</b>	<b>1262</b>

*Source: (Phan Văn Giưỡng, 1993)*

**Table 5. 4 Students Completing Year 12 Vietnamese in Australia, 1997 - 2005**

States	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
New South Wales	396	250	182	136	129	145	131	104	106
Victoria	462	412	439	348	333	343	350	345	365
South Australia	106	121	137	116	97	85	64	59	68
Queensland	N/A	N/A	85	72	42	46	42	30	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>783</b>	<b>758</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>559</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>580</b>

*Source: (Examination Boards of NSW, VIC, SA and QLD)*

There could be a number of reasons causing the overall decline from 1993 but the most obvious one would be that second generation Vietnamese students were not as eager to learn Vietnamese up to Year 12 level as those who came to Australia at school age in the 1980's and 1990's. The earlier arrivals could benefit from their higher levels of language competence and gain good scores which improved their chances of university entrance. For most students born in Australia, Vietnamese could not be considered an easy subject to achieve good marks at Year 12 because of their limited competence in the language. The decline in enrolments for Vietnamese at senior secondary level followed the general decline trend of this subject across all levels of schooling in Australia in recent years. For the five years from 2000 to 2005 the number of students who completed Year 12 Vietnamese in Australia remained much the same: over 500

students (*Table 5.3*) which still can be considered a significant number, compared to other minority community languages currently examined in Australia. So far other states and territories such as the Australian Capital Territory, Western Australia and Tasmania have not had the Vietnamese language accepted as a Year 12 public examination subject. Northern Territory students can study Vietnamese at Stage 1 (Year 11) and Stage 2 (Year 12) through the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia (SSABSA), using the South Australian Vietnamese syllabus. It has happened in the past but the number of students from Northern Territory has been very small: only a couple of students each year sat for the year 12 Vietnamese examination in the early 1980's. In the last two decades, there has been no student from Northern Territory enrolled in Year 11 or Year 12 Vietnamese programs.

## Schools of Languages in Australia

In order to provide an alternative opportunity for secondary students to learn Vietnamese when there was no Vietnamese program offered in their own school during school hours, the Education Departments in three states of Australia (NSW, VIC, SA) established after hours Schools of Languages. These schools continue to teach a variety of languages, including Vietnamese in the late afternoons or on Saturdays. In New South Wales the Saturday School of Community Languages started the first Vietnamese program in 1984 with 112 students. Ten years later, the number had increased to 1,200 students (an increase of 971%). In Victoria, the Victorian School of Languages introduced a Vietnamese program as early as 1981 with twenty-one students and by 1993 this school had 1,956 students enrolled in Vietnamese (an increase of 9214%) (*Table 5.5*).

*Table 5. 5 Students Studying Vietnamese through After Hours Schools of Languages, 1981-1994*

<i>Year</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>VIC</i>	<i>SA</i>
1981		21	
1982		12	
1983		45	
1984	112	80	
1985	174	40	
1986	382	87	36
1987	867	598	135
1988	885	884	153
1989	744	1144	110
1990	714	1262	129
1991	746	1402	179
1992	985	1559	192
1993	1023	1956	183
1994	1200	N/A	244

*Source: (Nguyễn Xuân-Thu, 1995 p.21)*

In South Australia, the South Australian School of Languages (SASL) introduced a Vietnamese program in 1986 with thirty-six students and in 1994 this school had 244 students (an increase of 577%) as shown in *Table 5.5* above.

Enrolments of Vietnamese in these afterhours schools in all three states were very high in the late 1980's and throughout the 1990's. During these years, the majority of students who were studying Vietnamese at secondary level came from these schools. Most of these students were first generation or generation 1.5 of Vietnamese in Australia. Their Vietnamese language competence was relatively high compared with those of the second generation Vietnamese born in Australia. The enrolment trend in these language schools did not continue upward but it started to decline quite rapidly from the year 2000, following the national trend of decline in secondary enrolments for the Vietnamese language all over Australia.

***Special Contribution of The Schools of Languages.*** The afterhours Schools of Languages in three states of Australia (NSW, VIC and SA) have played a significant role in the teaching of Vietnamese at secondary and senior secondary level. In Victoria and New South Wales, these Schools of Languages have prepared almost all students for Year 12 public examination in the Vietnamese subject. In South Australia, the South Australian School of Languages (SASL)'s role has been equally important in the promotion of Vietnamese language teaching but it played a less significant role in the preparation of students for Year 12 public examination of Vietnamese at the time. Unlike the situation in New South Wales and Victoria, Vietnamese ethnic schools in South Australia have been recognised as schools, which can prepare students for Year 12 public examinations. In fact, some Vietnamese ethnic schools such as St Mary's Vietnamese School Inc. and Marion Community Languages School have been teaching Vietnamese at Year 12 level since 1980, six years before the establishment of SASL in 1986. Other states and territories (ACT, QLD, WA, TAS and NT) have not had Vietnamese programs in an equivalent type of school.



## ***Ethnic Schools***

### **Overview**

The ethnic school system has existed for a long time in all States and Territories of Australia. Ethnic Schools or Community Languages Schools are established and managed by ethnic communities and groups themselves. According to the statistics from the Australian Federation of Ethnic Schools Association (AFESA) (Romaniw 2005), ethnic schools in Australia were teaching sixty-nine community languages in 2005 to a total number of students in excess of 100,000, using about 2,500 teachers/instructors. These schools were managed by about 700 ethnic school authorities.

**Funding.** The ethnic schools program is funded by the Commonwealth Government but on a very limited scale. The ethnic school authorities received \$30 per capita funding from the Commonwealth Government for the first time in 1980. The funding for each student increased to \$35 in 1983 then to \$ 38.50 in 1989 and by 2005 Commonwealth per capita funding was \$45. Thus, the increased rate of 0.5% in Commonwealth capita funding over a period of twenty-five years is negligible (0.02% per year). In addition to Commonwealth per capita funding, some State Governments (NSW, VIC and SA) also provide funding to support ethnic schools programs. The South Australian Government has supported ethnic schools since 1980 with a similar or even greater amount of funding than the Commonwealth for each student. In 2005 ethnic school authorities in South Australia received \$70 for each student per year from the South Australian Government. With such limited funding, those who work for the ethnic schools as teachers or administrators, usually give their time on a voluntary basis, in exchange for the love that they have for their own cultural heritage. Evidence shows that ethnic school teachers are very committed and the ethnic schools movement in Australia has been very strong. Ethnic schools have been recognised in the National Policy on Languages of Australia (Lo Bianco 1987) and the most recent National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools (MCEETYA 2005), as very important complementary providers of language education in Australia

**Organisational structure.** Organisational support structures for ethnic schools at both state and national levels have been improved considerably over the last few years. In each state, the school authority can become a financial member of the State Ethnic

Schools' Association. A few years ago, all State Ethnic Schools' Associations met together to establish a Federal body called the Australian Federation of Ethnic Schools' Associations (AFESA). The main aims of Ethnic Schools' Associations are to promote ethnic schools, to support ethnic school authorities and to assist with the professional development of ethnic school teachers. In South Australia, membership of the Ethnic Schools' Association of South Australia Inc. (ESA) is required for each individual school authority in order to obtain funding from the government which was administered by the Ethnic Schools' Board (ESB) at the time. The Ethnic Schools' Board in South Australia was a ministerial committee consisting of members representing parents, teachers and ethnic school authorities, as well as two ministerial representatives. The main tasks of this body were to assist ethnic schools to operate effectively and efficiently by administering an equitable grants program to schools. The Ethnic Schools' Board also assisted the schools with teachers' registration, professional development, and distribution of student achievement reports to mainstream schools.

**Enrolments.** The first Vietnamese ethnic schools were established in South Australia in 1979 and other Vietnamese schools in other states and territory began in the early 1980's. The number of schools as well as the number of students in Vietnamese ethnic schools in Australia has increased rapidly over a period of twenty-five years. By 2005 Vietnamese ethnic schools were strongly established in all states except the Northern Territory and Tasmania as shown in the following *Table 5.6*

*Table 5. 6 Enrolments in Vietnamese Ethnic Schools in Australia 2003-2005.*

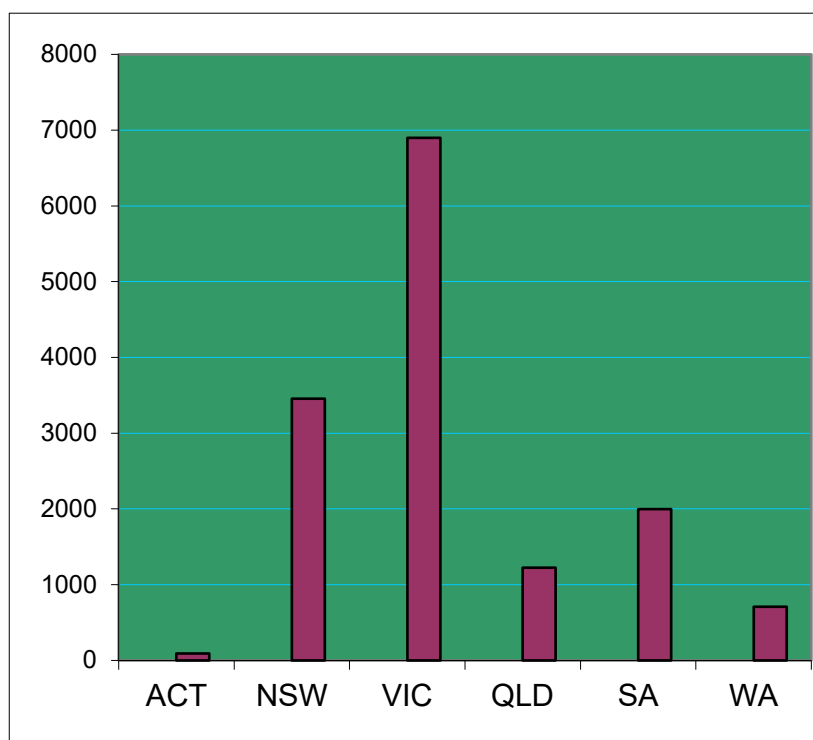
	ACT	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	
Years	Student N	Student N	Student N	Student N	Student N	Student N	TOTAL
2005	91	3453	6897	1225	1998	709	14373
2004	96	3550	6657	1258	1931	704	14196
2003	97	3500	6434	N/A	2056	685	12772

*Source: Ethnic Schools' Associations in Australia*

*Table 5.6* and *Chart 5.2* below show that there were over 14,000 students studying Vietnamese through ethnic schools in Australia each year over the period 2003-2005. This number constituted about 14% of the total number of students studying languages through ethnic schools Australia-wide. Ethnic school development was a high priority for the Vietnamese community in Australia during this period. Victoria and South

Australia had the largest numbers of students enrolled in the Vietnamese ethnic school programs in comparison with other languages in their own states.

*Chart 5. 2 Enrolments in Vietnamese Ethnic Schools by State 2005.*



Since the establishment of the Vietnamese ethnic schools in Australia, the three main states which have had the largest numbers of students studying Vietnamese at any time have continued to be Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia then followed by Queensland, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory.

*Table 5.6 and Chart 5.2* show that about 86% of students studying Vietnamese in Australia in 2005 were from the three states (NSW, VIC, SA). Victoria had the highest percentage (50%), followed by New South Wales (24%) and South Australia (14%). If one compares this percentage distribution to the Vietnamese population distribution in each state, one notices that the development of Vietnamese ethnic schools in New South Wales was relatively slow compared to that in Victoria or South Australia as New South Wales had the largest Vietnam born population compared with other states. Although the Vietnamese communities in the Northern Territory and Tasmania have put a great deal of effort in establishing Vietnamese ethnic schools, due to lack of funding and also due to the small number of people in those communities, their ethnic school programs only operated for a short period of time and were eventually closed in the early 1990's. There were no students studying Vietnamese at primary or secondary level in Tasmania or Northern Territory in 2005 as shown in *Chart 5.2 & Table 5.6* above.

### ***Ethnic School Authorities in Australia***

In 2005, Vietnamese language programs were provided by thirty-two different Vietnamese school authorities throughout Australia: one in the Australian Capital Territory, four in New South Wales, and sixteen in Victoria and six in South Australia. Western Australia had five Vietnamese schools teaching a total number of 709 students in 2005 but the names of the school authorities were not available through the Ethnic Schools' Association of Western Australia. It should be pointed out that the school authorities listed in *Tables 5.7 & 5.8* were those registered with the State Ethnic Schools' Associations in Queensland and New South Wales. There may be other Vietnamese schools which were functioning at the time but not registered with the Ethnic Schools' Association. It was not compulsory to register with the State Ethnic Schools' Associations in other states in order to receive funding, as was the case in South Australia. People who served in these school authorities came from church groups, cultural groups, parents' groups or community groups. Some school authorities in Victoria were responsible for a large number of students such as the Lac Hong Vietnamese School Inc. with 2,617 students or the Springvale Indo-Chinese Mutual Assistance Association with 1,070 students at the time. The smallest Vietnamese ethnic school operating in 2005 was the Newcastle Vietnamese School with only twelve students and one teacher as shown in *Tables 5.7 to 5.10* below. There was no Vietnamese school authority operating in the Northern Territory or in Tasmania in 2005.

***Table 5.7 Vietnamese Ethnic Schools Authorities in NSW 2005***

<b>School Authority</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Teachers</b>
1. Vietnamese Parents & Citizens Assoc.	900	55
2. Vietnamese Cultural Schools Assoc. Inc	2300	75
3. Newcastle Vietnamese School	12	1
4. Boddhi Vietnamese Language School	241	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>3453</b>	<b>143</b>

***Table 5.8 Vietnamese Ethnic Schools Authorities in QLD 2005***

<b>School Authority</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Teachers</b>
1. Hoa Binh Ethnic Vietnamese School	Not available	Not available
2. Trung Vuong Vietnamese Language School	NA	NA
3. Vietnamese Ethnic School in QLD Asso. Inc	NA	NA

*Table 5. 9 Vietnamese Ethnic Schools Authorities in SA 2005*

<b>School Authority</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Teachers</b>
1. Bo De school	102	6
2. Dac Lo Vietnamese Ethnic School	882	47
3. Lac Long Vietnamese Ethnic School	408	20
4. St Mary's Vietnamese School Inc.	45	3
5. Viet Community in Australia/SA Chapter School	523	28
6. Thang Tien School	38	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>109</b>

*Table 5. 10 Vietnamese Ethnic Schools Authorities in VIC 2005*

<b>School Authority</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Teachers</b>
1. Keysborough Vietnamese Language Centre	288	9
2. Mang-Non Vietnamese Language School Association Inc	124	13
3. The Lac Viet Vietnamese Language School	NA	NA
4. Saigon Vietnamese School Inc.	74	11
5. The Vietnamese Language Centre	46	4
6. Vietnamese Community School of Culture and Language	113	4
7. Springvale Indo-Chinese Mutual Assistance Association	1070	21
8. St Vincent Liem Vietnamese School	110	11
9. Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association of Victoria	51	5
10. Vietnamese Ethnic School of Broadmeadows Inc.	149	4
11. Vietnamese Parents' Club in Kensington	90	7
12. Richmond Vietnamese Language School	534	15
13. Hong Bang Vietnamese Ethnic School	424	25
14. Lac Hong Vietnamese School Inc.	2617	68
15. Whittlesea Vietnamese Language Centre Incorporated	328	13
16. Association for Vietnamese Culture Studies Incorporated	879	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6897</b>	<b>226</b>

People in charge of these schools were usually community leaders but most of all they were people who passionately believed in the ideology of keeping the Vietnamese language and culture alive for future generations of Vietnamese-Australians.

### ***Ethnic School Teachers in Australia.***

All teachers in the Vietnamese ethnic schools in Australia work mainly on a voluntary basis. They give two to three hours of their time each week to teach Vietnamese on the weekend or after school hours during the week. In terms of qualifications, the majority of Vietnamese ethnic schools' teachers qualified in Vietnam, with a small number qualifying in Australia. There are also a number of community members who offer their teaching services to the schools but do not have any formal qualifications. Vietnamese ethnic schools' teachers, like other ethnic school teachers in Australia, are not required to register with the Teachers Registration Board like mainstream teachers. However, in some states such as South Australia and Victoria, they have been required

to attend professional development courses organised by the respective State Ethnic Schools' Boards in order to become eligible for the Ethnic Schools' Board registration.

*Table 5.11* below shows that in 2005, there were 565 teachers (9 in ACT, 143 in NSW, 226 in VIC and 109 in SA) teaching a total of 14,373 students from Reception to Year 12, in the Vietnamese ethnic school programs in five different states and one territory of Australia. This total number of teachers did not include all Vietnamese ethnic school teachers in Western Australia as the data obtained from the Ethnic Schools' Association of Western Australia only recorded one co-ordinator for each of the five schools currently operating in Western Australia, as shown in *Table 5.11* below.

*Table 5. 11 Teachers in Vietnamese Ethnic schools in Australia 2003-2005*

	ACT	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	
Year	Teacher N	Teacher N	Teacher N	Teacher N	Teacher N	Teacher N	Total
2005	9	143	226	77	109	N/A	565
2004	9	149	219	51	99	N/A	528
2003	9	152	99	50	98	N/A	409

The success of Vietnamese ethnic schools in Australia can be attributed to many factors, but the most important one was the dedication, commitment and professional expertise freely given by more than five hundred teachers and community members who had tirelessly worked for the schools for many years, to make the Vietnamese ethnic school program the strongest of all ethnic school programs operating in Australia at the time.

## Tertiary Level in Australia

In the tertiary sector, the Australian Federal Government granted three years of special funding to universities and colleges of advanced education to introduce community languages in the 80s, based on the recommendations of the *1980 Review of Multicultural and Migrant Education* by the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs. As a result, Vietnamese was introduced for the first time in 1982 at Mount Lawley College of Advanced Education (WA), Philip Institute of Technology (VIC), the Institute of Catholic Education and Footscray Institute of Technology (VIC). A year later, in 1983, Vietnamese was also introduced at the Australian National University (ACT) and McArthur Institute of Technology (NSW). In 1985, Vietnamese became, for the first time in Australia, a major subject in the Bachelor of Arts Degree, at the

Footscray Institute of Technology. The Vietnamese course at Mount Lawley College of Advanced Education was shifted to the distance education mode and ceased in 1989.

By 1996/97, there were twelve universities offering Vietnamese, ten of them offered it as a major component in Bachelor of Arts Degrees or an elective in other first degrees as shown in *Table 5.12* below.

*Table 5.12 Australian Universities Offering Vietnamese in 1996-1997*

Institutions	States	Vietnamese course
1. Australian National University	A.C.T.	Beginners-major
2. University of New South Wales	N.S.W.	Beginners-Elective
3. Griffith University	Queensland	Beginners-major
4. Monash University	Victoria	Beginners-major
5. Melbourne University	Victoria	Beginners-major
6. La Trobe University	Victoria	Beginners-Elective
7. Adelaide University	South Australia	Advanced/Beginners-major
8. Deakin University	Victoria	Interpreting-major
9. RMIT University	Victoria	Advanced-major
10. Swinburne University	Victoria	Beginners-major
11. University of Western Sydney	N.S.W.	Interpreting-major
12. Victoria University of Technology	Victoria	Advanced/Beginners-major

*Courtesy: Phan Văn Giưỡng, Victoria University of Technology, Australia*

Within a few years, the number of universities offering Vietnamese had declined markedly. In 1997, there were twelve universities offering Vietnamese; in 2000, the number had fallen to eight as shown in *Table 5.13* below.

*Table 5. 13 Universities Offering Vietnamese in 2000*

Institutions	States	Vietnamese course
1. Australian National University	A.C.T.	Beginners-major
2. Griffith University	Queensland	Beginners-major
3. Monash University	Victoria	Beginners-major
4. Adelaide University	South Aus.	Beginners-major
5. RMIT University	Victoria	Advanced-major
6. Swinburne University.	Victoria	Beginners-major
7. University of Western Sydney	N.S.W.	Interpreting-major
8. Victoria University of Technology	Victoria	Advanced/Beginners-major

*Source: A Report by the Australian Academy of the Humanities, 2000*

Since 2003 the situation has become even worse with only two universities offering Vietnamese: one in Victoria and one in ACT as shown in *Table 5.14* in the following:

*Table 5. 14 Universities Offering Vietnamese 2003- 2005*

Institutions	States	Vietnamese course
1. Australian National University	A.C.T.	Beginners-major
2. Victoria University of Technology	Victoria	Advanced/Beginners-major

**Enrolments.** Looking at enrolment numbers during the period 1996-98 as shown in *Table 5.15* below, one can see that in 1997 there were 344 students enrolled in Vietnamese at six different universities in Australia. By 1998, the number of students enrolled in Vietnamese slightly increased in comparison to 1996 but decreased in comparison to 1997.

*Table 5. 15 Students Enrolled in Vietnamese in Australian Universities: 1996-98*

Year	1996		1997		1998	
Institutions	Year level 1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Total	Year level 1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Total	Year level 1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Total
1.A.N.U.	12 10 5	27	20 15 10	45	15 15 10	40
2.Adelaide Uni.	22 3 5	30	50 25 17	92	10 18 20	48
3.Monash Uni.	12 8 4	24	10 7 6	23	15 5 4	24
4.Griffith Uni.	10 7 0	17	12 5 4	21	14 6 4	24
5.RMIT Uni.	12 6 4	22	11 9 12	32	15 11 5	31
6.Victoria Uni.	39 23 21 18 12 11	124	18 19 16 32 16 10	121	16 14 24 15 13	108
<b>Total</b>	<b>125 69 50</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>163 96 75</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>119 86 70</b>	<b>275</b>

The Victoria University of Technology had the highest number of students in both Beginners and Advanced streams. Every year, during this period, over one hundred students studied Vietnamese at Victoria University of Technology. This is understandable because this university had the longest established Vietnamese program. Vietnamese formed a major component of the Bachelor of Arts and double degrees of Business and Arts (International and Hospitality) within this university for many years.

Since 1999, the enrolments in Vietnamese programs at tertiary level decreased rapidly. By 2005 there were only two programs of Vietnamese at tertiary level: one at the Australian National University (ANU) and the other at Victoria University of Technology, each with a total number of students less than one hundred and only one full-time lecturer in each university. The program at ANU was designed mainly for non-Vietnamese background students at Beginner level. Victoria University of



Technology had two streams (Advanced and Beginners levels) but these programs were taught by one full time junior staff member and some casual hourly paid teachers. Thus, the overall picture of Vietnamese Studies at tertiary level in Australia appeared very pessimistic, unless the Australian government or the Vietnamese community provided support.

### **Vietnamese Programs in TAFE**

The Vietnamese language program has never been well developed in the TAFE sector in Australia. The survey of LOTE in TAFEs conducted by Baker and White (1991) of the Centre for Languages Teaching and Research, University of Queensland, showed that there were very few Vietnamese programs being offered in TAFE Colleges around Australia. In 1991, there was one class of Vietnamese at Bankstown TAFE College and one class of interpreting and translating at the TAFE College of RMIT. The Adelaide TAFE College offered one class in Vietnamese that year and the ACT institute of TAFE offered one small commissioned Vietnamese course in 1991. Other states and territories had no Vietnamese classes in the TAFE sector. The situation has not changed much since 1991. Vietnamese programs in TAFE were designed for adult Australians who want to learn Vietnamese in order to communicate with Vietnamese people whom they meet through their work or through marriage. All of these courses were short term, aiming at equipping the learners with basic conversational Vietnamese. These courses were not always successful as they were often prepared and taught by non-qualified teachers of Vietnamese. The need for such TAFE courses in Australia is even more limited at present, as after a period of thirty years living in Australia, Vietnamese-Australians have become more confident with English and those who are in contact with them can use English more readily than in the past.

Since the focus of this study is on the Vietnamese community in South Australia, the Vietnamese programs at primary and secondary levels in South Australia will be examined in more detail in the following section.

## ***Vietnamese Teaching and Learning in South Australia***

In South Australia Vietnamese was taught during the early 1980's as a mother tongue maintenance program in mainstream primary schools, sometime before other states and territory. A small number of mainstream schools (State and Catholic schools) also introduced Vietnamese as a second language at primary and secondary level from the early 1990's but the success of such programs seemed to be limited. This could have been due to the lack of qualified teachers and appropriate teaching resources at the time. Vietnamese language has been taught mainly through State schools, Catholic schools and Ethnic schools. It has never been offered in any schools within the Independent sector in South Australia.

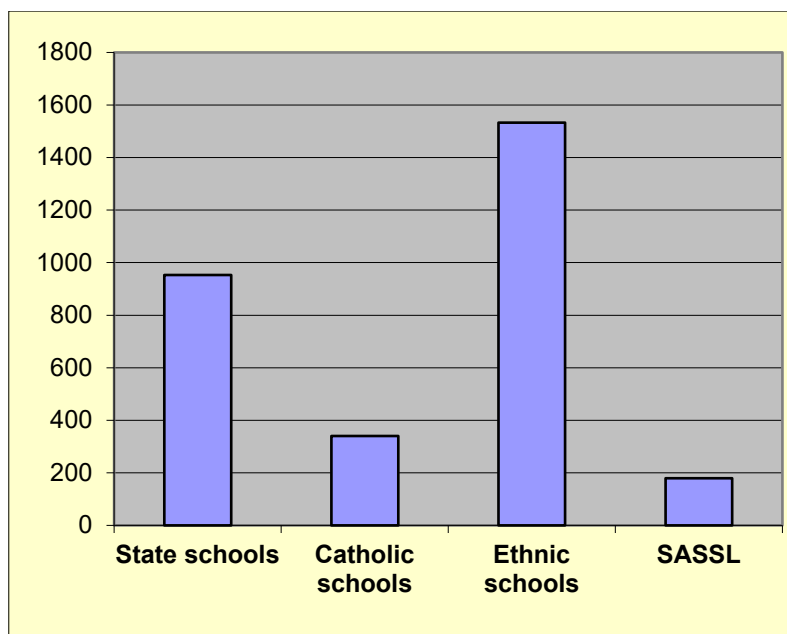
### **Enrolments at Primary and Secondary Levels**

The earliest set of statistics for Vietnamese enrolments in South Australian schools was available through a report commissioned by the South Australian Institute of Languages (SAIL) in 1993 called "The Situation of Teaching and Learning Vietnamese in South Australia" written by Lê Văn Điệp. According to this report, there were 3,005 students studying Vietnamese throughout all South Australian primary and secondary schools in 1991 (1,132 from State schools including students from SASSL, 340 from Catholic schools, 1533 from Ethnic schools, and none from Independent schools). This figure represented only 0.9% of the whole Languages Other than English (LOTE) enrolments at the time. *Table 5.16* and *Chart 5.3* show clearly that the Vietnamese enrolment numbers in 1991 were highest in the ethnic school system, followed by the state schools then Catholic schools. This pattern has continued until the present time and is likely to continue in the future.

***Table 5.16 Vietnamese Enrolments in South Australian Schools 1991***

<b><i>Schools</i></b>	<b><i>Primary</i></b>	<b><i>Secondary</i></b>	<b><i>Total</i></b>
State schools	756	197	953
Catholic schools	316	24	340
Ethnic schools	954	579	1533
SASSL	0	179	179
<b>Total</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>979</b>	<b>3005</b>

*Source: SAIL, 1993 p.7*

**Chart 5. 3 Vietnamese Enrolments in South Australian Schools 1991**

*Table 5.17* below shows that in 2002 the number of students learning Vietnamese from all systems of schools in South Australia was relatively strong. There were 3,735 students studying Vietnamese at the time: 2,993 at primary level (R-7) and 742 at secondary level (8-12). Over half of these students came from the ethnic schools system. There was no Vietnamese program offered in any independent school. Therefore, Vietnamese students from independent schools usually studied Vietnamese through the School of Languages or a Vietnamese ethnic school.

**Table 5. 17 Vietnamese Enrolments in South Australian Schools 2002**

	Catholic Schools	State Schools	Independent Schools	Ethnic Schools	Total
Primary R-7	418	877	0	1698	<b>2993</b>
Secondary 8-12	106	284	0	352	<b>742</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>1161</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2050</b>	<b>3735</b>

*Source: Catholic Education Office & Education Department of SA*

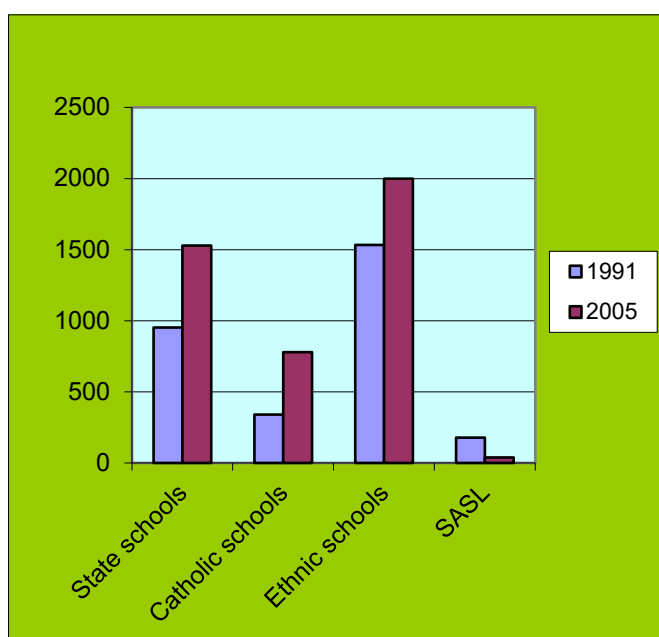
**Table 5. 18 Vietnamese Enrolments in South Australian Schools 2005**

	Catholic Schools	State Schools	Independent Schools	Ethnic Schools	Total
Primary R-7	410	1408	0	1734	<b>3552</b>
Secondary 8-12	370	158	0	264	<b>792</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>1566</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>4344</b>

*Source: Catholic Education Office & Education Department of SA*

The comparison of enrolment figures displayed in *Tables 5.17 & 5.18* above shows the overall Vietnamese enrolments between 2002 and 2005 in South Australian schools only increased slightly (16%) and most of the increase occurred at primary level. Catholic schools had the highest rate of increase (49%) followed by the state schools (35%). Enrolments in ethnic schools slightly decreased during this period (-2.5%).

*Chart 5. 4 Vietnamese Enrolments in SA 1991 & 2005*



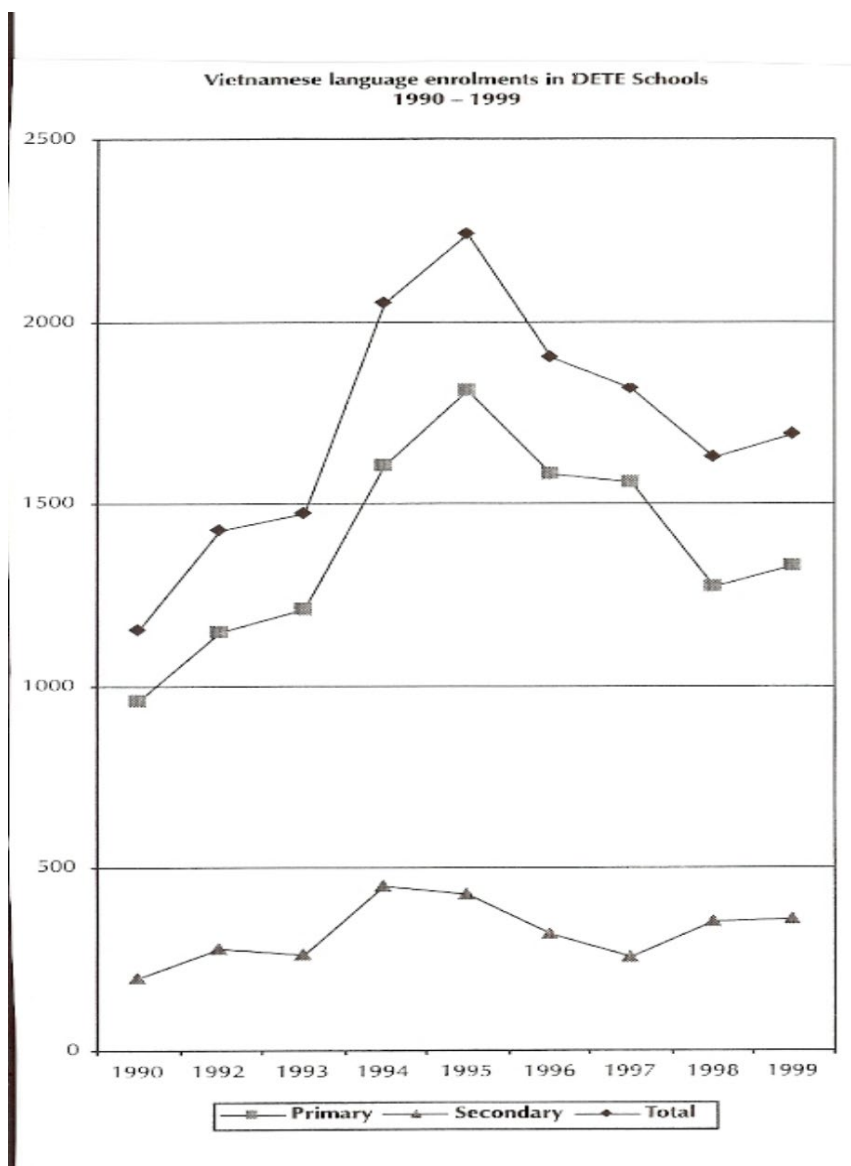
The comparison of enrolment numbers for Vietnamese between 1991 and 2005 as displayed in *Tables 5.16 & 5.18* as well as *Chart 5.4* above shows that Vietnamese enrolments had increased (45%) during this period of fourteen years, on average 3% per year. It was noted that there was an increase in enrolments across all three school systems but Catholic schools had the highest increase rate (129%), followed by state schools (60%), then ethnic schools (30%). Most of the increase occurred at primary level in the ethnic schools sector. There was a clear decline of 19% in the overall enrolments at secondary level (from 979 students in 1991 to 792 students in 2005) during this period and most of the decline occurred at secondary level in the state schools and the ethnic schools. It was also noted that there was a substantial decline (79%) in Vietnamese enrolments in the School of Languages (SASL) over this period (from 179 students in 1991 to 38 students in 2005). Reasons for this decline will be discussed further in the relevant section of each school system of this chapter.

## State Government Schools in South Australia

State schools or schools run by the Department of Education, Training and Employment of South Australia during this period, which later on became the Department of Education and Children's Services, have been teaching Vietnamese since 1982. Although Vietnamese has never been funded by the Commonwealth Government as one of the Asian languages for wider teaching in Australia like Chinese and Japanese, the State Government of South Australia has always supported Vietnamese as one of the nine priority languages taught in state schools in South Australia since the early 1980's.

**Enrolments.** Apart from ethnic schools, State government schools have had the largest number of students studying Vietnamese at any given year since 1982, especially during the period (1990-1999). Vietnamese enrolments in primary schools were much larger than those in the secondary schools during this period and this trend has continued until the present time. Enrolments at both primary and secondary levels reached their peak in the years 1994-95 with 2,250 students in total as shown in *Chart 5.5* below.

*Chart 5.5 Vietnamese Enrolment in State Schools in South Australia 1990-1999*



Statistics on Vietnamese enrolments presented in *Table 5.19* below shows that the overall enrolment number for the period (1999-2004) continued to decline each year but the overall figure for 2005 shows a slight increase compared with previous years. This may be a sign of renewal in the Vietnamese learning movement in recent years.

*Table 5. 19 Vietnamese Enrolments in SA State Schools 1999-2005*

<b>Year</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>
<b>Primary</b>	1331	1189	972	877	1092	1012	1408
<b>Secondary</b>	357	340	334	284	201	191	158
<b>Total</b>	<b>1688</b>	<b>1529</b>	<b>1306</b>	<b>1161</b>	<b>1293</b>	<b>1203</b>	<b>1566</b>

*Source: SA Department of Education & Children's Services*

The comparison of the overall enrolment figure between 1999 and 2005 reveals a decline of 7% but the comparison of the 2005 figure with that of the peak period 1994/95 shows a much greater decline rate of 30%. It was noted that the Vietnamese enrolment number at primary level has been steadily increasing since 2003 while that at secondary level has been decreasing quite rapidly from 2002 to follow the national trend. The decline was most noticeable at senior secondary level, as discussed further on, in this chapter.

**Programs.** State schools in South Australia have offered two types of Vietnamese programs, namely, the *Mother Tongue Maintenance Program (L1)* for students of Vietnamese background and Vietnamese as a *Second Language Program (L2)* for students of non-Vietnamese backgrounds.

*Mother Tongue Maintenance Program (L1).* In 2000 there were twenty-two primary schools teaching Vietnamese as Maintenance and Development Program (L1) with a total of 3.30 full time equivalent positions. Thirteen schools were allocated 0.1 fraction of teaching position, seven schools were given 0.2 fraction and only two schools were allocated 0.3 fraction. In 2006 the number of schools had increased to twenty-six but the overall allocation of teaching positions was reduced to 2.35 full time equivalent and some schools only had 0.1 fraction of time, which represented only half a day. Because of this scattered mode of salary distribution, some teachers were appointed to teach in four or five different schools to make up for the full time equivalent of their teaching load. This situation could have had a negative impact on the effectiveness of their teaching program. Teachers working in this situation would have to spend lots of their

time travelling between schools. How much time could really be given to each student in a week?

Statistics in relation to the Mother Tongue Maintenance Program (L1) are presented in *Table 5.20* below.

*Table 5. 20 Vietnamese Maintenance and Development Program in SA State Schools 2000 -2006*

No	School	Fraction of time			
		2000	2004	2005	2006
1	Brahma Lodge PS	0.1	0.1	0.05	
2	Burton PS	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1
3	Challa Garden PS	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2
4	Ferryden Park PS	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
5	Gepps Cross PS	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.05
6	Ingle Farm PS	0.1			
7	Karrendi PS	0.1	0.1	0.05	0.05
8	Kilburn PS	0.1			
9	Madison Park JPS/PS	0.1			
10	Mansfield Park PS	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.15
11	Mawson Lakes School		0.05	0.05	0.05
12	Northfield PS				0.1
13	Parafield Gardens JPS/PS	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1
14	Para Hills West		0.05		
15	Paralowie R-12	0.1	0.1	0.05	0.05
16	Para Vista CPC-7		0.1	0.05	0.05
17	Pennington JPS	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
18	Pennington PS	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
19	Pooraka PS	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
20	Ridley Grove PS	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
21	Salisbury Downs PS	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
22	Salisbury North PS	0.1			0.1
23	Salisbury North West JPS/ PS	0.1			
24	Settlers Farm PS	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
25	The Pines PS	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
26	Virginia PS	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.25
<b>Total</b>		<b>3.30</b>	<b>2.60</b>	<b>2.35</b>	<b>2.35</b>

*Source: SA Department of Education & Children's Services*

*Second Language Program (L2).* The set of data obtained from the Department of Education and Children's Services in 2005 shows that there were twenty-three primary schools offering Vietnamese but only four schools offered Vietnamese as a second language (L2) to students of non-Vietnamese background and the program in each school was very small. It was also reported that in 2005 there were twelve secondary schools teaching Vietnamese including the South Australian School of Languages (SASL). These programs were taught by twenty-six teachers with only two FTE (full time equivalent) teaching positions. It appears that for the period 2000-2005, the Vietnamese programs in State government schools had been maintained at minimum level in terms of resources and number of programs. The number of programs at

primary level stayed almost the same but those at secondary level had reduced rapidly. In 2005, apart from a few Vietnamese classes offered through the School of Languages (SASL), there was only one secondary school (Woodville High) offering Vietnamese as both L1 and L2 programs to students from Year 8-12. Thus, the overall picture of Vietnamese in State government schools at secondary level was not very promising.

**Consultant position.** In order to support the teaching of Vietnamese, the Department of Education and Children's Services in South Australia employed a full-time advisor for Vietnamese for a number of years in the 1980's and 90's. The main role of the advisor was to support teachers of Vietnamese in areas of professional development and curriculum materials. This service was outsourced from 1999-2004, to the University of Adelaide first, then to the South Australian Vietnamese Teachers Association Inc. The advisor position was reduced to half time during this period. Since 2005, the Department has assigned this service to a high school, but the consultant position has been reduced to only 0.2 fraction. This is another example of resources being reduced to a bare minimum.

## Catholic Schools in South Australia

Catholic schools in South Australia have been supportive of the Vietnamese language programs. Vietnamese has been one of the nine languages commonly taught in Catholic schools in South Australia, alongside Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Latin and Spanish, over the last few decades. Statistics provided by the Catholic Education Office in South Australia show that in 2002 there were a total of 788 students studying Vietnamese through Catholic schools in South Australia. In 2005 both the enrolment figures and the number of schools teaching Vietnamese remained almost unchanged as shown in *Table 5.21* below.

*Table 5. 21 Vietnamese Programs in SA Catholic Schools 2005*

Name of Schools	Year level	Student number	Teacher fraction	Teaching time p/w	Program
Mt Carmel College	Y 8-12	54	0.6	180'	L1 and L2
Thomas More College	Y8-12	47	0.85	180'	L1 and L2
Our Lady of Sacred Heart	Y8-12	220	1.25	90'	L1 and L2
Christian Brothers College	Y 8-11	49	0.4	180'	L1
St Joseph School	R- 7	152	0.3	45'	L1 and L2
St Patrick School	R-7	258	0.8	40'	L1 and L2
<b>Total</b>	<b>R-12</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>4.2</b>		

*Source: Catholic Education Office and Vietnamese Teachers Association in SA Inc.*

*Table 5.21* shows that there were four secondary schools teaching Vietnamese, namely



Christian Brothers College (CBC), Thomas More College, Mt Carmel College and our Lady of the Sacred Heart College (OLSH) and two primary schools teaching Vietnamese namely, St Patrick's School and St Joseph's School-Ottoway. All of these schools had a large number of Vietnamese background students. Catholic schools seemed to focus on the Mother Tongue Maintenance Program (L1) for students of Vietnamese background. However, for the last few years, except for Christian Brothers College, the other five schools had also taught Vietnamese as a Second Language program (L2) for students of non-Vietnamese background.

*Table 5. 22 Vietnamese Enrolments in SA Catholic Secondary Schools 2005*

	<b>Mt Carmel</b>	<b>CBC</b>	<b>OLSH</b>	<b>Thomas</b>
<b>Year level</b>				<b>More</b>
Y 8	22	17	125	17
Y 9	20	15	60	12
Y 10	2	10	15	10
Y 11	8	7	12	4
Y 12	2		8	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>47</b>

*Source: SA Catholic Education Office and Vietnamese Teachers Association in SA Inc.*

Enrolments in the L2 program were very high at Year 8 and 9 levels, but they dropped in Year 10. So far, no students in the L2 program in these two schools have reached Year 11 or Year 12 level (*Table 5.22*). There could be many reasons causing this situation but the main reason seemed to be that the requirements of Year 11 and 12 curriculum statements from the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia (SSASA) were too difficult for non-Vietnamese background students to complete the program successfully. This situation did not only apply to the Catholic schools but also to the state schools where Vietnamese L2 program was offered.

## **The South Australian School of Languages**

The South Australian School of Languages (SASL) was established in 1986 as a result of the recommendation from Smolicz's Task Force Report (1984) "Education for a Cultural Democracy". Initially this school was named "The South Australian Secondary School of Languages" (SASSL) and few years later its name was changed to "The South Australian School of Languages" (SASL). This is a special language school funded by the State Government; its establishment was welcomed by many as an innovative and exciting initiative to promote a complementary system of language teaching to provide an opportunity for secondary students to learn a language, not taught in their own school. SASL runs classes at a number of locations after school

hours on weekdays for students from Years 8-12. SASL started to offer the Vietnamese language program at the time of the establishment of this school in 1986, along with other five community languages namely Croatian, Khmer, Lithuanian, Polish and Russian. For many years enrolments in Vietnamese were larger than those in any other language program offered through SASL, with over two hundred students enrolled each year. Vietnamese enrolment number in SASL reached its peak in 1997 with 275 students then started to decline gradually from 1998. Since 2002, the decline rate has been accelerated with less than fifty students enrolled in Vietnamese each year as shown in *Table 5.23* below

*Table 5. 23 The SA School of Languages Enrolments by Language 1986-2004*

LANGUAGE	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Arabic																	18	14	
Aus Ind Lan												31	15	4	60				
Chinese			116	140	153	135	96	89	85	91	78	96	107	80	89	87	134	130	147
Croatian	22	46	45	40	30	35	33	43	33	24	20	36	42	50	64	55	31	44	49
Dutch				9	10	12													
French																9	51	39	67
German																13	16	14	36
Indonesian					23	31	28	27	33	100	93	80	75	49	37	26	43	42	54
Italian																72	51	61	95
Japanese				15	12	92	65	118	64	151	119	135	170	224	186	139	91	124	119
Kaurna														3					11
Khmer	35	74	65	54	96	110	95	102	93	88	172	207	223	221	198	117	118	88	79
Korean									13	9	27	44	60	45	21	23	21	21	30
Lithuanian	7	8	10																
Malaysian			9		14	13	8												
Persian						23	35	40	22	34	42	39	41	53	42	28	50	46	46
PitmanUatiana																13			
Polish	39	43	64	103	114	123	130	128	98	99	89	70	92	92	76	66	62	60	75
Russian	16	27		24				21	46	41	35	46	47	52	52	82	72	52	54
Serbian																			
Spanish		47	57	57	30	76	112	127	136	130	151	160	141	140	151	192	184	162	171
Turkish									7	7	9								
Vietnamese	36	135	153	110	129	179	192	183	244	240	243	275	198	209	208	105	49	39	38
TOTAL	155	380	519	552	611	829	815	903	869	1008	1089	1220	1216	1222	1214	1017	971	938	1067

*Source: SASL Annual Report 2004*

The 2005 statistics show that the school had only thirty-eight students enrolled in Year 11 and Year 12 Vietnamese. There were no enrolments for Vietnamese from Years 8-10 in 2005. The comparison of the enrolment figure in 2005 with that of its peak period 1997, shows a decline rate of 86%. In 2006, SASL was teaching twenty-seven languages to a total number of 1,296 students, including forty-nine students enrolled in Vietnamese. Thus, the Vietnamese enrolment in 2006 showed a slight increase compared to the three previous years. It appears that this drastic decline in Vietnamese enrolments in the South Australian School of Languages over a period of twenty years (1986-2006) reflected the state and national trends of decline in Vietnamese enrolments at secondary level and it may be attributed to a number of factors.

- SASL encouraged mainstream schools to take over the Vietnamese program after the initial stage of establishment. This was the case with the Vietnamese program at Thomas More College, which was established by SASL, then became a normal language program offered by the College during the normal school hours.
- SASL has not expanded the Vietnamese program to include Vietnamese as a second language program (L2).
- Decline in enrolments resulted in funding cuts in the program. In 2005 there was only one full time staff member teaching Vietnamese in SASL, as compared to three or four full time teaching positions in the late 1980's.
- It is possible that students have preferred to do their year 12 Vietnamese studies at a nearby ethnic school linked to their own community.

## Ethnic Schools in South Australia

According to the 2005 Annual Report of the Ethnic Schools' Association Inc (ESA), the ethnic school system in South Australia, provided language classes in forty-one community languages, through ninety-five ethnic school authorities, to a total number of 7,815 students. A quarter of these students came from the Vietnamese ethnic schools. In South Australia there are seven school authorities but only six of them are currently operating at eleven locations throughout the metropolitan area, to provide Vietnamese language programs from Reception to Year 12. All of these schools were established in the early 1980's except for the "Thang Tien School" which was established at a later time in 2000. Two of the school authorities belong to church groups, namely the Bo De School belonging to the Buddhist Community and the Dac Lo School belonging to the Catholic community in South Australia; the others belong to community groups.

*Table 5. 24 Vietnamese Enrolments in Ethnic Schools in South Australia 1991- 2006*

School Authorities	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Bo De School	50	63	70	50	71	84	84	103	106	110	156	159	162	103	102	79
Dac Lo Viet School	637	651	692	691	663	705	754	693	735	755	735	714	790	889	882	911
Lac Long Viet School	516	656	715	680	666	697	785	701	695	620	498	613	553	430	408	379
Marion Eth Sch of Com Lan	6	10	9	5	6											
St Mary's Viet School	226	225	235	237	180	160	136	130	134	100	105	80	80	40	45	55
Viet Com in Aus/SA Ch Sch	375	380	433	448	449	490	436	432	382	383	425	418	401	423	523	556
Thang Tien School										81	99	88	70	46	38	24
<b>Total of Viet Students</b>	<b>1810</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>2154</b>	<b>2111</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>2136</b>	<b>2195</b>	<b>2059</b>	<b>2052</b>	<b>2049</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2072</b>	<b>2056</b>	<b>1931</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>2004</b>
<b>Total of all Languages</b>	<b>8154</b>	<b>8590</b>	<b>8765</b>	<b>8886</b>	<b>8859</b>	<b>9069</b>	<b>9000</b>	<b>8419</b>	<b>8316</b>	<b>8209</b>	<b>8043</b>	<b>8291</b>	<b>8129</b>	<b>7815</b>	<b>8038</b>	<b>8346</b>
<b>% of Viet Students</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>24%</b>

Source: The Ethnic Schools' Association of SA Inc. Annual Reports 1991-2006

*Table 5.24* shows that since 1991, there were about 2,000 students studying Vietnamese through ethnic schools each year in South Australia. This constituted 25% of all students studying a language in the ethnic schools system in South Australia. This is a significant percentage, considering the total number of people who spoke Vietnamese at home in South Australia at the time was only 12,582 people (0.9%) compared to the population of 40,176 Italians (2.8%) and 27,363 Greeks (1.9%) in the state (ABS, 2001). In fact, for the period (2000-2005), the Vietnamese language program was the largest, with the greatest number of students compared to all other language programs taught in the ethnic schools system in South Australia at the time as shown in *Table 5.25* & *Chart 5.7* below.

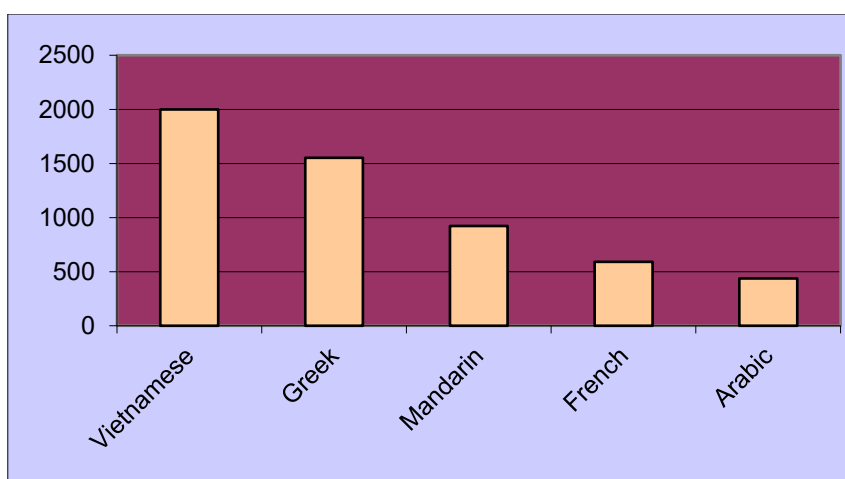
*Table 5.25 Five Languages with Largest Enrolments in Ethnic Schools in SA 2000-2005*

Years	Languages				
2005	Vietnamese	Greek	Mandarin	French	Arabic
	1998	1552	922	592	436
2004	Vietnamese	Greek	Mandarin	French	Arabic
	1931	1613	944	473	450
2003	Vietnamese	Greek	Mandarin	French	Arabic
	2056	1652	959	485	390
2002	Vietnamese	Greek	Mandarin	French	Arabic
	2072	1684	998	460	446
2001	Vietnamese	Greek	Mandarin	French	Arabic
	2018	1581	966	446	375
2000	Vietnamese	Greek	Mandarin	French	Arabic
	2049	1572	1024	528	359

Source: *The Ethnic Schools' Association of SA Inc. Annual Reports 2000-2005*

*Table 5.25* also shows that since the year 2000, the three languages which had the highest number of students, in order of student numbers, were Vietnamese, followed by Greek then Mandarin. *Chart 5.6* below gives a clear picture of enrolments in 2005 of these five languages as they relate to by numbers.

*Chart 5. 6 Five Languages with Largest Enrolments in Ethnic Schools 2005*



As mentioned previously, 14% of all students studying Vietnamese through ethnic schools in Australia, in 2005, were doing so through the Vietnamese ethnic schools in South Australia. The South Australian Vietnamese ethnic school program was indeed the strongest of all the states, when considered in proportion to the Vietnamese population in each state. It was also the strongest program in South Australia in comparison with the other forty-one community languages taught through the ethnic schools system in South Australia at the time.

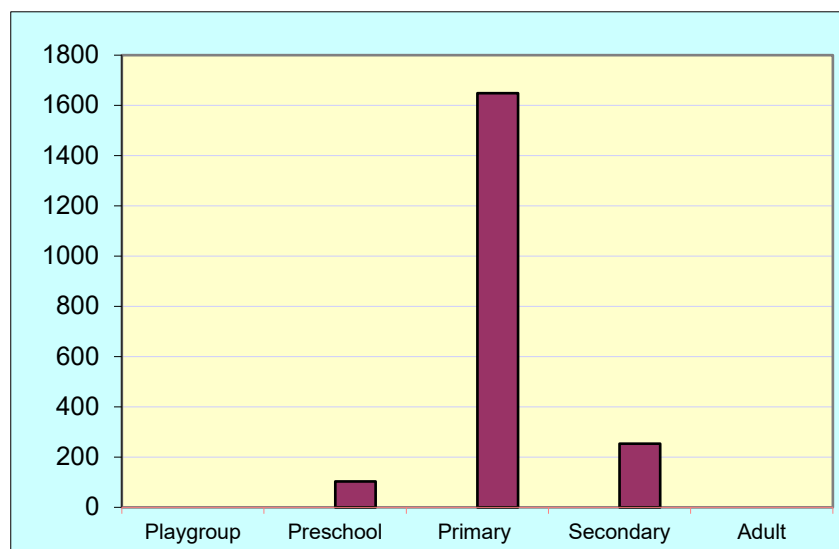
**Students' Categories.** The overall enrolment trend in the Vietnamese ethnic school programs has been steady for the last sixteen years while Vietnamese enrolments in the mainstream schools have been decreasing. The statistical analysis presented in *Table 5.26* shows that Vietnamese ethnic schools' enrolments at primary level were steady throughout the 1990s, then started to grow more rapidly from 2000. Enrolments at secondary level were very high in the mid-1990s, then decreased rapidly from 2000. This is consistent with the national trend of decline in the Vietnamese subject at secondary level and to a large extent reflects demographic trends and age levels within the Vietnamese-Australian community.

*Table 5. 26 Students' Categories in Vietnamese Ethnic Schools Program in SA 1991-2006*

	Play group		Pre school		Primary		Secondary		Adult		Total	
Year	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1991	0	0%	275	15%	954	53%	579	32%	2	0%	1810	100%
1992	0	0%	100	5%	1090	55%	794	40%	1	0%	1985	100%
1993	0	0%	59	3%	1756	82%	323	15%	16	1%	2154	100%
1994	0	0%	58	3%	1225	58%	828	39%	0	0%	2111	100%
1995	0	0%	28	1%	1334	66%	673	33%	0	0%	2035	100%
1996	0	0%	142	7%	1270	59%	724	34%	0	0%	2136	100%
1997	10	0%	183	8%	1311	60%	691	31%	0	0%	2195	100%
1998	10	0%	206	10%	1201	58%	640	31%	2	0%	2059	100%
1999	0	0%	368	18%	1054	51%	625	30%	4	0%	2051	100%
2000	0	0%	153	7%	1342	65%	544	27%	10	0%	2049	100%
2001	0	0%	124	6%	1505	75%	389	19%	0	0%	2018	100%
2002	10	0%	233	11%	1465	71%	352	17%	12	1%	2072	100%
2003	0	0%	154	7%	1627	79%	275	13%	0	0%	2056	100%
2004	0	0%	183	9%	1517	79%	231	12%	0	0%	1931	100%
2005	0	0%	165	8%	1569	79%	264	13%	0	0%	1998	100%
2006	0	0%	103	5%	1648	82%	253	13%	0	0%	2004	100%

Source: (The Ethnic Schools' Association of SA Inc. Annual Reports)

**Chart 5. 7 Students' Categories in Vietnamese Ethnic School Programs in SA 2006**



*Table 5.26* and *Chart 5.7* above show that in 2006 there were 2,004 students studying Vietnamese from Reception to Year 12 through the ethnic schools' system in South Australia. The largest group of students (82%) was at primary level, only a small number (13%) at secondary level and there was no playgroup children or adults studying Vietnamese through ethnic schools in South Australia in 2006. It was noted that the downward trend at secondary level was clearly manifest in the enrolment numbers of schools teaching Vietnamese at secondary level only, such as St Mary's Vietnamese School and the School of Languages as shown in *Tables 5.23 and 5.24* above.

**Contribution of Vietnamese Ethnic Schools at Senior Secondary Level.** Unlike the other states, the ethnic schools system in South Australia has been recognised as a valuable complementary provider of language programs and ethnic schools can prepare students for Year 12 (SACE Stage 2) language subjects' public examination that count toward university entrance. In fact, the Marion Ethnic School of Community Languages offered the first Vietnamese class at Year 12 level in 1980 and continued its Vietnamese program until 1995 as shown in *Table 5.24* above. In 2005 there were two Vietnamese ethnic schools offering Vietnamese programs up to Year 12 level namely, Dac Lo Vietnamese Ethnic School, and St Mary's Vietnamese School Inc. St Mary's Vietnamese School has been teaching Vietnamese from Year 7 to Year 12 since 1979 and it has a very good reputation for its success in preparing students for Year 11 and Year 12 Vietnamese, SSABSA assessments. Since 1980, St Mary's Vietnamese School has successfully prepared 1,650 students for Year 12 Vietnamese public examination, with many students obtaining outstanding results of 20/20, and many hundreds of

students have completed the Year 11 Vietnamese program successfully. In 1997, five out of the six students, who achieved merit marks 20/20 for Year 12 Vietnamese examination, were from St Mary's Vietnamese School. This is one of the many great achievements of the Vietnamese ethnic school system in South Australia.

The success of Vietnamese ethnic schools in South Australia both in terms of quantity and quality is due to the following contributing factors:

- The commitment and dedication of more than one hundred teachers who have devoted their time not only to teaching but also to attending professional development courses to upgrade their skills and knowledge. They have also given their time and expertise to prepare appropriate curriculum and teaching materials.
- The absolute commitment and dedication of those Vietnamese leaders, who have established these schools, and who have subsequently been involved in their administration so successfully with limited resources.
- Support from Vietnamese parents who realised the importance for their children learning Vietnamese as soon as they started school. This change of attitude on the part of Vietnamese parents became obvious only recently, as in the past Vietnamese parents were more concerned for their children to learn English in order to succeed in their studies at school. Some parents might think that learning Vietnamese would hinder their children's ability to master English well.
- A good network of support provided by the Ethnic Schools' Board until its demise at the end of 2015 and the Ethnic Schools' Association Inc to the Vietnamese Schools' authorities in the areas of school administration and professional development for teachers.
- Government recognition and financial support. Although limited, this is better in South Australia than in other states. In 2006 the funding was slightly increased so the total funding for each student in South Australia was \$126 per annum (\$50 from the Commonwealth and \$76 from State Government) whereas in other States such as Queensland, ethnic schools only received \$50 for each student from the Commonwealth at the time. Apart from the capital funding, ethnic schools in South Australia could also apply for financial support to purchase teaching materials and equipments through a need based funding scheme from the Ethnic Schools' Board.

## Senior Secondary Level in South Australia

South Australia was the first state in Australia to have had the Vietnamese language accepted by the Public Examination Board of SA (PEB) as a matriculation (Year 12) subject for university entrance in 1980. The first group of about ten students, who sat for the Vietnamese PEB examination in 1980, came from a Vietnamese ethnic school namely, the Marion Community Languages School. The researcher happened to be the teacher of this first Year 12 Vietnamese class. She was heavily involved in the writing of the first Vietnamese syllabus in 1980 and continued her involvement in the preparation of subsequent Vietnamese syllabuses and curriculum statements within the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia (SSABSA) until 2005.

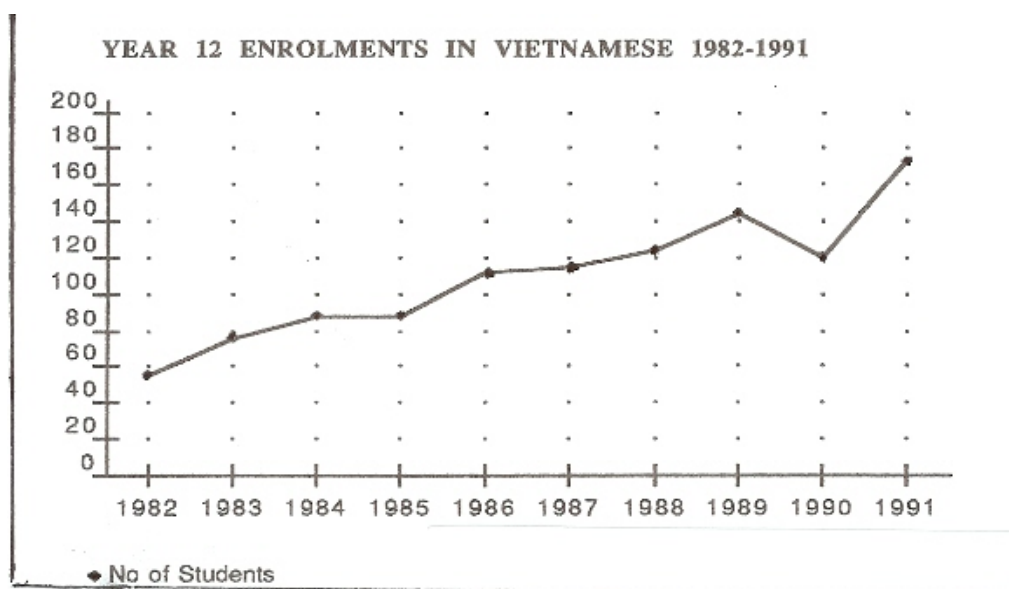
**SSABSA Vietnamese Courses.** Prior to 1992 there had been only one course (Specialist level) for Vietnamese at Year 12 level in South Australia but since the introduction of SACE (South Australian Certificate of Education) in 1992, SSABSA offered two Vietnamese courses at SACE Stage 1 (equivalent to Year 11) and SACE Stage 2 (equivalent to Year 12) levels. The Vietnamese Extended course was introduced in 1992 at SACE Stage 1 level, then became a publicly examined subject at SACE Stage 2 in 1997 and it has been replaced by the Continuers Level course since 2001. The Extended and Continuers Level courses were designed for those born in Australia or came to Australia at a very early age while the Specialist or the Background Speakers course was designed for those born in Vietnam who came to Australia after having completed as little as one year of education in the target language. This division does not seem logical, as it is not based on the students' language competence but simply on their arrival date in Australia. Apart from the Extended and Specialist course, SSABSA also introduced Vietnamese at Accelerated level in 1992 for those who start learning the language at Year 11. The Vietnamese Accelerated course has been only available at SACE Stage 1 level and so far there is no SACE Stage 2 for this course.

**Enrolments.** Available statistics obtained from the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia (SSABSA) show that enrolment figures at Year 12 started with a modest number of fifty-six students in 1982, and increased rapidly in the 1980's and 1990's, then started to decline from 2000, as shown in *Chart 5.8* and *Table 5.27* below. *Table 5.27* also shows that, the highest number of students completing Vietnamese SACE Stage 2 in South Australia, occurred in 1994, with 204 students, then it has gradually



declined. The comparison of enrolment figures at SACE Stage 2 level of all Vietnamese courses between 1994 and 2004 (the year with lowest enrolments) shows a 71% decline, which is a substantial decrease in enrolments at this level.

**Chart 5. 8 Enrolments in Year 12 Vietnamese in South Australia 1982-1991**  
(Numbers of Students)



Source: SAIL Report, 1993 p.8

**Table 5. 27 Students Completing SACE Stage 2 Vietnamese in South Australia 1992-2005**

Courses	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Extended						29	71	87	94	73				
Specialist	150	183	204	186	135	77	50	50	22	24				
Continuers Level											38	40	39	42
Background Sp											47	24	20	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>68</b>

Source: (SSABSA Annual Reports)

**Table 5. 28 Students Completing SACE Stage 1 Vietnamese in South Australia 1992-2005**

Courses	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Accelerated			10	0	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Extended	186	62	29	29	36	84	141	106	144					
Specialist	158	253	273	239	153	83	72	70	19					
Continuers Level										128	82	73	94	75
Background Sp										33	48	13	15	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>112</b>

Source: (SSABSA Annual Reports)

With regard to enrolments at SACE Stage 1 (Year 11) level, *Table 5.28* above shows that for a period of fourteen years (1992-2005), the number of students studying Vietnamese at SACE Stage 1 (Year 11) level has fluctuated in all Vietnamese courses. The highest

number of students completing Vietnamese SACE Stage 1 occurred in the period 1992-1994 with more than three hundred students each year. The majority of these students were enrolled in the Specialist course, and they were likely to belong to the generation of Vietnamese who came to Australia at a very young age (generation 1.5). Since 1995, enrolments have gradually decreased with the lowest number of 86 students in 2003. That was the first time that enrolment numbers dropped to less than one hundred students. The comparison of enrolment numbers between 1992 and 2003 shows a decline of 75% which is a very significant drop in enrolments. However, *Table 5.28* also shows a slight increase in enrolments at SACE Stage 1 (Year 11) level in the years 2004-2005. This may be an indication of renewed interest in the language among second generation Vietnamese or it could be the beginning of a language revival movement in the Vietnamese community.

Thus, there has been a strong downward trend of Vietnamese enrolments at senior secondary level in South Australia since 1997, which is consistent with the national trend of decline. It was noted that although the overall enrolments in both SACE Stage 1 and Stage 2 courses have decreased, the rate of decline in the Background Speakers course has been more rapid than the Continuers level in the last few years. This could be explained by the fact that, after more than thirty years of being settled in Australia, with very few migrants directly from Vietnam to South Australia, the majority of students studying Vietnamese at the time of this research, would be born in Australia of Vietnamese parents. These students were eligible to enrol in the Continuers Level course; only a small number of students, mostly overseas students from Vietnam, would enrol in the Background Speakers course. Therefore, the number of enrolments in the Background Speakers course was lower compared to that of the Continuers at both Stage 1 and 2 in the years from 2000-2005 as shown in *Tables 5.27 & 5.28* above. The critical feature for Vietnamese language maintenance is how many enrolments there are in the course for Australian born students, which is the Continuers Level course. The enrolments in this course remained relatively low (less than 50 students at SACE Stage 2 level). The main reasons causing the decline were explained earlier but there could be an added reason for the rapid decline of enrolments in South Australia - the closure of the Vietnamese program at the University of Adelaide in 2001. As students did not see any possibility of continuing Vietnamese at university level in South Australia, many dropped Vietnamese at Year 11 or Year 12.

## Tertiary Level in South Australia

The teaching of Vietnamese at tertiary level in South Australia followed the same trends as the rest of the country. In 1987 Vietnamese was introduced at the former South Australian College of Advanced Education (SACAE). When parts of the College merged with the University of Adelaide, Vietnamese became a major subject in the University Bachelor of Arts degree in 1991. The Vietnamese program at Adelaide University had two streams, namely the Beginners stream for those who started studying the language with no prior knowledge of Vietnamese and the Specialist stream for those who had completed Year 12 Vietnamese or its equivalent. The program was very popular and it was open to students from all three universities in South Australia. Students could enroll in Vietnamese as a major, sub-major counting towards the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science (Computing) or as an elective towards other undergraduate degrees. The enrolments in Vietnamese at Adelaide University were highest in the period 1991-92, then the University reduced the student numbers by reducing the number of subjects offered. In 1993-94, only two subjects of Vietnamese Studies were available. Thus, enrolment figures decreased noticeably in those years. For the period 1995-97, the university employed a second full time contract lecturer and consequently, the full sequence of Vietnamese subjects was offered and the enrolment figures increased considerably as shown in the following *Table 5.29*

*Table 5.29 Enrolments in Vietnamese at SACAE and Adelaide University 1987-2000*

Year	Enrolments (N)	EFTSUs <sup>2</sup>
1987	20	2.4
1988	28	3.36
1989	38	4.54
1990	38	4.56
1991	87	18.85
1992	99	26.51
1993 <sup>3</sup>	42	16.5
1994	50	16.96
1995	83	21.59
1996	104	26.76
1997	137	24.26
1998	61	12.51
1999	105	18.51
2000	76.50	14.47

*Source: Centre for Asian Studies Enrolment Record, Adelaide University*

<sup>2</sup> EFTSUs stands for equivalent full time student unit. Adelaide University allocated resources to Departments, based on this model of calculation.

<sup>3</sup> Only two subjects of Vietnamese (Viet II and Viet III) were offered in 1993 and 1994. Therefore, enrolment figures dropped considerably compared to previous years.

The Vietnamese program at Adelaide University was indeed underfunded with only one full time permanent lecturer at Level B and some casual hourly paid teachers. The Vietnamese permanent staff member was responsible for all aspects of the course and taught a very heavy load. For example, in 1992 the student: staff ratio was 26.5:1 for Vietnamese Studies, more than double the normal ratio 13:1 for language subjects in the University at the time. The only exception to this was the period from 1995-1997 when the University appointed a second full time lecturer position, using some of the special funding for Vietnamese from the Commonwealth Government.

An Adelaide University Faculty Review of Vietnamese Studies was conducted in 1998 and this review recommended that by 2001 the University should

*...bring about a full-fledged discipline of Vietnamese with prospects of additional resources becoming available to it as soon as possible. And in the event that it is not achievable the University should develop a contingency plan for the maintenance for the Vietnamese language program.*  
(Recommendations Nos 3&4, p ii)

Instead of implementing the Review recommendations to develop the program by 2001, the University decided to close the entire Vietnamese program at the end of 2001, due to lack of funding and reduction of enrolments. It is regrettable that the Vietnamese course at Adelaide University was never given adequate resources nor the opportunity to develop into a fully-fledged university discipline, even on a trial basis.

As Adelaide University was the only institution which offered Vietnamese, since the closure of its Vietnamese program in 2001, there has been no Vietnamese course available at tertiary level in South Australia. The lack of Vietnamese programs at tertiary level over the last few years has already had some negative effect on the primary and secondary programs. It is certain that the rapid decrease in enrolments at senior secondary level has some direct link with the unavailability of Vietnamese course at university level. The researcher found that since the closure of the Vietnamese program at Adelaide University in 2001, many secondary students have said that they did not take up Vietnamese at Year 12 because they would not be able to continue it at university and consequently, they did not see much prospect of being able to use Vietnamese in their professional life.

### **Reasons for Decline in Enrolments**

There are many reasons which could explain why the Vietnamese language programs at both tertiary and secondary levels took off very well in the late 1980's and throughout the 1990's, then rapidly declined after 2000. The most obvious ones are discussed below.

- *Lack of funding*

The lack of serious financial commitment from the Australian governments at both state and federal level for the development of Vietnamese was obvious. Vietnamese has never been funded as one of the Asian languages as Japanese, Chinese or Indonesian have been at tertiary level, because Vietnamese has never been considered by the Australian Government as a potential trade language for Australia. Most of the university programs were funded with a one-off grant for three years in the late 80's or early 90's. When the funds run out, the University, having to cope with many competing demands, did not see Vietnamese language and culture as a priority discipline and decided to cut it out. The same applies to the Vietnamese programs at primary and secondary level. Vietnamese has never been recommended or funded by the Government for wider teaching or promoted as a potential trade or tourism language for Australia. This was a very short-sighted view on the part of the Government as Vietnam, with a population of 83.39 million in 2005 (Vietnam Population and AIDS Indicator Survey by the US General Statistical Office, GSO, 2005), could become a country with good potential for trade, educational exchange and tourism for Australia.

- *Lack of appropriately qualified teachers and teaching materials*

The second language programs in Vietnamese in primary and secondary schools were not as successful as they could have been because of the lack of appropriately qualified teachers and suitable teaching materials. In South Australia, for example, most of the Vietnamese second language programs (L2) seemed to encounter difficulties, because teachers did not have the necessary training in classroom discipline techniques and, in addition, they lacked suitable curriculum materials. Many of the teachers involved in the teaching of Vietnamese in South Australia at present, were trained in Vietnam and for some of them the command of professional English as well as appropriate language teaching methodologies still present some difficulty.

- *Vietnamese is no longer an easy subject option*

In the 80s and early 90s, most of the students enrolled in Year 12 Vietnamese were born in Vietnam and when they arrived in Australia they already had a very good knowledge of the Vietnamese language and culture. Thus, the subject did not present any difficulty for them. They usually passed well in the Year 12 examination and obtained good marks for entry into university courses in Australia. Vietnamese students at the time usually enrolled in Vietnamese and four other subjects, namely Mathematics 1 and 2, Physics and Chemistry as these subjects did not require a high level of English. The present situation is completely different. Apart from a small group of overseas students, almost all students enrolled in Vietnamese at present are second generation Vietnamese. They were born and educated in Australia; their Vietnamese oral and written skills are limited. Therefore, to pass Vietnamese well at Year 12 is a real difficulty for them. Vietnamese is no longer an easy option for them to get high marks. On the contrary, it is even tougher than other English subjects. Although assessment boards in Australia have tried from time to time to modify the Vietnamese syllabus and curriculum resources to reflect this change in the student body, the present structure and content of various Vietnamese curriculum statements applied in Australia are still very demanding, even unrealistic for students of Vietnamese background, let alone for second language learners of non-Vietnamese background.

- *Scaling*

Scaling (a moderation procedure used by the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia to moderate the marks of Year 12 publicly examined subjects for university entrance purpose) has also had a negative effect on the Vietnamese enrolments. Both parents and students in the Vietnamese community showed great concern about the scaling of languages in Australia. They thought it was unfair that the marks in Vietnamese were usually scaled down by two to three in the aggregated subject results. This negative perception of scaling did affect some students' decision not to study the subject at Year 12 level.

- *No real career path*

Those who did not rank the intrinsic value of learning Vietnamese highly, for example, being motivated to learning Vietnamese in order to maintain their own Vietnamese cultural heritage, did not enroll in the language at Year 12 level.

They did not see any real opportunity for them to continue the study of Vietnamese at university level which could eventually have led to a possible career path in Australia or overseas.

Evidence presented in this chapter shows that in 2005 language teaching and learning at primary level in South Australia was flourishing and this trend could be expected to continue into the future but at secondary and tertiary level the prospects were not promising. If one considers the decline in language learning among students of Vietnamese background at all levels, especially at senior level, as an indicator of language shift or language loss, then it is obvious that, thirty years, after the first settlement of Vietnamese refugees in Australia, there are signs of language loss.

## **Issues in Vietnamese Language Teaching in Australia**

### **Teacher Supply in Australia**

At the time of this research, there were approximately 650 teachers teaching Vietnamese in all school systems in Australia, namely Catholic schools, State Government schools and Ethnic schools, but the majority of these teachers (565) were teaching in the Ethnic schools. It should be noted that many of the mainstream school teachers also taught in the ethnic school system. Most of these teachers were trained in Vietnam and requalified in Australia; only a small number of them did their teacher education in Australia. This group of teachers consisted mainly of first generation Vietnamese with a median age of forty-five to fifty. Thus, in ten or fifteen years' time, when the present group of teachers reaches retirement age, with no prospect of new teachers coming into the Vietnamese teaching force, the Vietnamese programs will inevitably be at risk from a lack of available qualified teachers.

### **Teacher Training Courses in Australia**

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, there were nine tertiary institutions in Australia which provided many training and retraining courses to teachers of Vietnamese. These institutions were La Trobe University, Melbourne University, Phillip Institute of Technology (now RMIT), the Institute of Catholic Education (now the Australian Catholic University), Footscray Institute of Technology (now Victoria University of Technology), the South Australian College of Advanced Education (now University of South Australia), Flinders University, Mount Lawley College of Advanced Education

(now Edith Cowan University) and Macarthur Institute of Technology (now University of Western Sydney, Macarthur). Almost all of the 650 teachers currently teaching Vietnamese in Australia were trained or retrained through one of the above institutions in the 1980s or 1990s. It was noted that in 2005 there was no teacher training nor interpreting course in the Vietnamese language through any tertiary institution in Australia, so how can Australia train teachers and interpreters for this language? In ten years' time, when the group of teachers currently teaching Vietnamese in Australia retires, there will be hardly any teachers left to continue with the teaching of Vietnamese in the mainstream schools. The next inevitable step may be the complete closure of Vietnamese language programs in the mainstream. It would be regrettable if the Australian Government and the Vietnamese community let this situation happen. It is really a waste of the time, considerable efforts and resources invested in this language for the last three decades. It is also a great loss to linguistic richness not only for the Vietnamese community but also for Australia as a self-proclaimed multicultural society. By 2006 all but two the Vietnamese courses at the above institutions were closed. There was no specific Vietnamese course at tertiary level to train or retrain teachers of Vietnamese for the future. This means that the future of the Vietnamese program in Australian schools is very bleak unless the Australian Government and the Vietnamese community find ways to address this issue of teacher supply immediately.

## **Teaching Resources in Australia**

As the Vietnamese communities have now been established in Australia for three decades, teaching materials, textbooks and curriculum materials for Vietnamese are more readily available than before but the teachers need to be aware of their suitability and relevance when using such materials. Main items of teaching resources produced in Australia are listed in the following section.

### ***Language text books***

- *Modern Vietnamese levels 1-4* with workbooks and audio cassettes by Phan Văn Giưỡng for Year 7-12 students of Vietnamese background.
- *Vietnamese from Beginners to Advanced level (Book 1-6)* with workbooks and audio cassettes by Phan Văn Giưỡng, for adult learners of non-Vietnamese backgrounds.
- *Functional Vietnamese* by Phan Văn Giưỡng for travellers and business people.
- *Vietnamese Interactive Book* by Phan Văn Giưỡng, computer-aided learning.



- *Study Vietnamese Together levels 1-3* with CD's and audio cassettes by Nguyễn Hữu Quảng, for adult learners of non-Vietnamese backgrounds
- *Em học Tiếng Việt* by Thái Đắc Nhượng (1991) (Vol 1 and 2) for junior primary students of Vietnamese background.
- *Set of Textbooks for Primary Students of Vietnamese Background* produced by Trần đắc Trí and Huỳnh Thu Thủy for the Vietnamese Community in Australia/ SA Chapter Vietnamese Ethnic School.

### ***Syllabus and curriculum materials***

- The first set of Vietnamese curriculum R-8 was prepared by Trần Quốc Hùng and then Lê Văn Điệp (1988-1992) for the Department of Education, Employment and Training, South Australia. Marie Trần thị Niên was the Language editor and consultant for this project. This set of curriculum materials consisted of curriculum books and three workbooks entitled:

*Vietnamese Stage C:* for teachers and learners from Reception to Year 2, non-Vietnamese background.

*Vietnamese Stage D:* for teachers and learners of middle years, primary level, Vietnamese background.

*Vietnamese Stage 3:* This book had the same format as Stage C and Stage D. It was designed for students of Vietnamese background who had completed Stage C and Stage D.

- Vietnamese curriculum statements for Vietnamese Continuers, Stage 1 and 2, and Vietnamese Background Speakers level, Stage 1 and 2 from SSABSA.
- Vietnamese Year 12 curriculum statements (VHC) from Victoria.
- Vietnamese Year 12 curriculum statements (HSC) from New South Wales.
- Vietnamese Syllabuses for Beginners from Year 7 to 10 by Phan Văn Giưỡng, based on the Australian Language Levels (ALL) Guidelines.
- SACS framework, Alphabetic Language Companion document produced by the Education Department of South Australia (2005).

### ***Reading Materials***

- *Two series of readers consisting of 18 books* (six in Vietnamese and twelve bilingual readers) for primary and junior high school students, published in the 1980's by the former Phillip Institute of Technology and Vietnamese Language and Culture Publications.

- In the 1980's there were also a few readers in Vietnamese produced by the New South Wales Catholic Education Office for primary school students; some storybooks produced by a teacher in Western Australia and a dozen picture books were translated into Vietnamese and published by the Victorian Department of School Education.

### ***Other Teaching Resources***

At the time of this research, in Australia there were other resources such as dictionaries, films, videos, CD's, pictures, newspapers, and magazines produced in Australia and overseas on Vietnamese language and culture readily available. Books and other teaching resources published in Vietnam are still not very commonly used in Australia because of their social and political content. These are not always deemed appropriate to the Australian educational context.

## **Vietnamese Teaching and Learning in France**

When one examines the question of Vietnamese language education in France, one finds that it is in no way comparable to the Australian situation simply because the Vietnamese language program has never been given an appropriate place in the French mainstream education system at primary or secondary levels. The most common languages other than French taught in French schools are English, German and Spanish although the list of foreign languages is quite large including Italian, Literary Arabic, Chinese, Modern Hebrew, Japanese, Dutch, Polish, Portuguese or Russian. Apart from these foreign languages, there are also a number of regional languages such as Alsatian, Basque, Breton, Corsican and Occitan taught in schools where there are speakers of these languages (Dickson & Cumming 1996:37).

It is interesting to note that languages spoken by minority ethnic groups residing in France, such as Italian and Portuguese, were defined as foreign languages. Vietnamese was not included in the list of languages to be taught in schools, although the size of the Vietnamese population in France at the time was quite large. Thus, the maintenance of Vietnamese language and culture in France relied entirely on the Vietnamese community and the parents. Vietnamese parents have been teaching the language to their children at home or sending them to Vietnamese community schools.

## **Vietnamese Community Schools in France**

In France ethnic schools or community schools are not funded by the Government, but some community groups, such as the Vietnamese Catholic community or the Vietnamese Buddhist community in Paris, have organised Vietnamese classes for Vietnamese children as part of their social and educational activities. These classes were taught in an informal way, not by qualified teachers but by young adults who are leaders of the group. In 1996, and again in 2001, the researcher had the opportunity to visit the Vietnamese classes organised by the Vietnamese Catholic community in Paris a number of times. Children who attended these classes belonged to a group called “The Eucharistic Children Group”. In 2001 when the researcher visited this community, she was invited to visit each of the ten classes of Vietnamese in operation at the time. The largest group had about fifteen students and the smallest had five. She was told that these students’ ages ranged from six to fourteen and many of them had been born in France. There were no official records kept of enrolments in each class but data obtained from an interview with the group leader, who was also responsible for these Vietnamese classes, revealed that there were about ten teachers and over a hundred students studying Vietnamese at this community centre each year. The leader reported that members of the “Eucharistic Children Group” gathered once a week on Saturday afternoons at the Catholic Community Centre for their group activities and during that time, they spent about two hours learning Vietnamese with their leaders. They all seemed very keen on learning the language although the environment in which they studied was most uncomfortable. There were not many chairs or tables in the rooms so they had to sit on the floor or on top of each other in tiny rooms. In terms of books and teaching resources, the leaders had to produce them with very limited financial resources provided by the Catholic community or by the parents. A similar situation applied to the children of the Vietnamese Buddhist community in France.

This was certainly far from adequate, but this was the only way that the community could help its young members to learn the Vietnamese language and culture so that they can continue to worship in their own language in the context of Vietnamese traditions. Observation data shows that so far, all religious, social and cultural activities in Vietnamese communities in France and in Australia have been conducted in the Vietnamese language. Evidence obtained from more than twenty interviews with Vietnamese community leaders from France and from Australia all point to the same

conclusion that Vietnamese leaders have firmly believed in the value of using Vietnamese language as a way to maintain the Vietnamese culture and the Vietnamese identity at both group and individual level.

### **Vietnamese Studies at Tertiary Level in France**

It is interesting to note that although Vietnamese is not supported at all by the Government at primary and secondary level, France has a long tradition of teaching Vietnamese at various French universities and colleges. In the past, Vietnamese Studies at tertiary level in France were very strong and there were many outstanding scholars specialising in Vietnamese language and culture. However, the study of Vietnamese language and culture has declined since the 1960's, when France ceased to play a major part in Vietnam's political life. In 2005 Vietnamese was offered at two tertiary institutions namely the *Université Paris 7- Denis Diderot* in the faculty of *Langues et Civilisations de l'Asie Orientale (LCAO)* and the *Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO)*. The teaching programs at both universities were very similar. These courses were designed for non-Vietnamese background students who started studying Vietnamese language and culture at beginner level in first year, then progress to third year in order to obtain a Bachelor Degree, specialising in Vietnamese Studies (*Licence de Vietnamien*). Students could also continue their studies in Vietnamese language, literature and culture at Master Degree level (*Maitrise de Vietnamien*) or Ph D level with research topics related to the Vietnamese communities or Vietnam (for more information refer to l'INALCO website: [www.inalco.fr/ina](http://www.inalco.fr/ina)).

The numbers of students enrolled in the Vietnamese courses were similar to that of other Asian languages taught at both universities such as Chinese, Japanese and Korean at the time. But there were only a few second generation Vietnamese students who enrolled in these courses at undergraduate level. At postgraduate levels there were only a small number of overseas students who came from Vietnam to further their study at universities in France. The majority of overseas Vietnamese students in France at the time were enrolled in courses such as Engineering, Science and the teaching of French language.

It is interesting to note that France had the third largest number of overseas students from Vietnam after Australia and the United States. In the year 2003-2004, France

welcomed about 3,200<sup>4</sup> students from Vietnam which was a 30% increase from the previous year. In 2005 there were thirty French universities and thirteen other institutions participating in the education export market to Vietnam and this market has been growing quite rapidly.

Thus, if one compares the Vietnamese Studies program at tertiary level in France to that in Australia, one must conclude that France has a much better system. France has at least two well established and fully developed programs of Vietnamese Studies at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. These programs were well funded with appropriate resources and staffing, whereas in Australia at the time of this study, there was no specialised course in Vietnamese Studies at postgraduate level. The two Vietnamese courses still being offered through the Australian National University and the Victoria University of Technology were very limited and these courses did not have a secure future. However, it should be pointed out that all Vietnamese tertiary courses in France were designed mainly for non-Vietnamese students and not for the maintenance of Vietnamese language and culture within the Vietnamese community in France. Vietnamese is mainly taught as a foreign language and not as a community language at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

## **Language Policy in Australia and France**

When settled in any new country, Vietnamese people recognised the importance of the Vietnamese language and its vital role in the maintenance of the Vietnamese cultural identity. Therefore, all the Vietnamese communities overseas including those in Australia and France, have put a lot of effort into establishing Vietnamese language classes or ethnic schools for their children to have the opportunity to learn the Vietnamese language and culture, whenever and wherever there is a possibility for them to do so. Vietnamese community leaders and those who have sympathy for the Vietnamese language and culture have worked together to advance the cause for the last thirty years in Australia and even longer in France. However, not many of these countries have responded to this request positively, except perhaps Australia. Thus, in the following section of this chapter, the researcher examines the place of Vietnamese language in the national and state language policies in Australia and wherever possible, will make a comparison to the situation in France.

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<sup>4</sup> Les communiqués de Presse 10/11/2004 from the website: [www.ambafrance-vn.org/comm](http://www.ambafrance-vn.org/comm)

## **Vietnamese in the Language Policy of Australia**

When the Vietnamese community started to form itself in Australia in the late 1970's, the Commonwealth Government was already under enormous pressure from many other ethnic groups to move to the stage of formulating a multicultural policy in response to the migrants' needs for linguistic and cultural recognition. As a result, a review of "Migrant Services and Programs", known as the Galbally Report (Committee to Review Migrants Services and Programs, 1978) made a number of important recommendations that were implemented. Over the next two decades, Australia became known internationally for its commitment to community language teaching and policy developments. Both at National level and in some states (VIC, NWS & SA) a number of important language policy documents were released.

### **National Policies**

- A National Language Policy (Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts, 1984) was the first attempt to develop a national policy statement on languages which recommended that all Australians be given the opportunity to learn another language. This policy was produced by the Senate Standing Committee in 1984. It emphasised competence in English, the maintenance and development of languages other than English, provision of services in languages other than English, as well as the opportunity for learning second languages. Vietnamese was not considered as a significant language in this policy.
- The National Policy on Languages (Commonwealth Department of Education, 1987), referred to as the Lo Bianco Report, was released in May 1987. This policy was based on the guiding principles of the previous Senate Report (1984) and in this document, Lo Bianco spelt out more clearly four basic justifications for multilingualism - social justice, enrichment for all Australians, economic strategies and Australia's external relationships. In terms of languages, the Lo Bianco report went further than the Senate report. It laid down the principle that all children in Australian schools should study English and another language, and nominated nine languages as school subjects for local and international reasons: Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, French, German, Greek, Indonesian/Malay, Italian, and Spanish. It recognised for the first time, Australian Aboriginal languages and Auslan as the language of the deaf, but

Vietnamese, although spoken by 102,062 people (ABS 1991) at the time, was not classified as one of the nine priority languages in this policy document.

- *The Australian Language and Literacy Policy (1991)*. Against the background of Australia's economic and trade priorities, Dawkins, then Federal Minister for Education, Employment and Training, released the White Paper, *Australia's Language: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy (1991)*. The White Paper laid much stress on the importance of all Australians knowing English not just only orally but having effective literacy in English to enable them to participate in Australian society. It also strongly supported Asian languages and invited "educational systems and institutions in each state to select according to their priorities, up to eight languages appropriate for local and regional needs and aspirations, from the following fourteen languages: Aboriginal languages, Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Russian, Spanish, Thai and Vietnamese". In the Dawkins (1991) policy document, Vietnamese was among the fourteen priority languages but was not recognised as one of the Asian languages for wider teaching, as it was not considered as a potential language for trade. Therefore, it missed out on the funding given specifically for Asian languages.

A year later (1992), the Council of Australian Governments reduced the number of priority languages from fourteen to eight. Vietnamese was in the second phase of priority, but this varied from state to state. Despite these national language policy statements, and the funding priorities established, each state had its own policy on teaching languages other than English. In New South Wales, Vietnamese was one of the fourteen priority languages. However, in Victoria and South Australia Vietnamese continued as one of eight priority languages, as shown in the following discussion of the states.

- *National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005-2008*: This national policy document on languages education in Australia, released in 2005 by the Federal Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs of Australia (MCEETYA), consisted of two parts: The first part was a National Statement for Languages in Australian Schools which re-affirmed the vital role of language and culture skills in education for Australia in the global

world at the time and in the future. This goal had previously been identified in the 1989 National Goals for Schooling, and re-affirmed in the 1999 National Goals, where languages other than English were recognised as one of the eight key learning areas. The 2005 National Statement stated that all “State Ministers of Education are committed to the vision of quality languages education for all students, in all schools, in all parts of the country” (MCEETYA, 2005). In the second part of the document, a National Plan of action was outlined with six different areas or strands identified for Australian schools to implement during the next three years 2005-2008. These six strands were (1) Teaching and Learning, (2) Teacher Supply and Retention, (3) Professional Learning, (4) Program Development, (5) Quality Assurance, and (6) Advocacy and Promotion of Languages Learning.

In terms of language choice and provision, this document did not identify a list of priority languages but recognised that all languages were equally valid and beneficial for students and left the decision to be made by individual state and system jurisdictions and schools, depending on their local contexts. This document also recognised after hours Ethnic/Community Language Schools as legitimate and valuable providers of languages education in Australia.

When reflecting on the position of Vietnamese in this *National Language Statement*, in the light of the six languages listed as most commonly taught in order of enrolment numbers, (Japanese, Italian, Indonesian, French, German and Chinese), one could say that the Vietnamese position was rather weakened, as it was not included in the list of languages most commonly taught in Australia. One must wonder why the list stopped at number six instead of eight, as it had been for the previous two and a half decades, for each state and territory in Australia. One could also question whether ethnic school students were counted at all, in the review of commonly taught languages. If they had been, then Vietnamese certainly would appear on the list of six.

### **State Policies and Initiatives**

In Australia any new or special initiatives in the teaching of languages has generally been funded by the federal government so that it was possible for general policy to be agreed on federally, but the actual implementation was always a state matter. Each state



was left to formulate its own language policy and initiatives according to its educational needs.

### **New South Wales**

Vietnamese was not taught in any school in NSW until 1984 when it was introduced in the Saturday School of Languages. The *State Language Policy Report*, released in 1988 in response to the *National Policy on Languages* (1987) recommended special support to a list of six trade and Asian Languages, from which Vietnamese was excluded.

The NSW White Paper on curriculum reform *Excellence and Equity* (1989) recommended that the study of a language for at least one year (100 hours) be mandatory for the High School Certificate (HSC) by 1999. In this document, Vietnamese was listed as one of the twelve priority languages for wider teaching in NSW. As a result, Vietnamese has been offered in a number of primary and secondary schools, as well as seven centres of the Saturday School of Modern Languages in NSW. Vietnamese has been accepted for the High School Certificate examination in NSW since 1984 and most of the students sitting for the High School Certificate in Vietnamese come from the Saturday School of Languages.

### **Victoria**

The main objective of the LOTE Policy document in Victoria was to make one or more LOTEs available to all students in Victorian schools. It also aimed to make the study of a second language compulsory for all students from Year 7-10 by 1996. The *LOTE Strategy Plan* released in late 1993 set a target for all students from Reception to Year 10 to study a second language, and for 25% of all Year 11 and 12 students to undertake a second language study by the year 2000. Statistical evidence shows that this target was not fully reached in 2000. Vietnamese has been given a significant place in the LOTE Language Policy in Victoria. It was recognised as one of the eight priority languages and has been well supported since the early 1980's from primary through to tertiary level in Victoria.

### **South Australia**

South Australia has been one of the leading states in emphasising the teaching of community languages. To strengthen its support institutionally, according to Miller, (1986:338) South Australia set up an Ethnic Education Advisory Council in 1978 to advise on multicultural education, but this body was replaced within a year by a new

body with wider powers called the Multicultural Education Co-ordinating Committee (MECC). There were two early statements on how schools should respond to cultural diversity and their students: 1) *Our Schools and Their Purposes Into the 80's* produced by the Education Department of South Australia in 1981 and 2) *Diversity and Cohesion: A Policy Statement on Multicultural and Education* released by the Education Department of South Australia in 1982. These documents set a solid foundation for all language and multicultural education programs in South Australia over the next two and a half decades.

The most influential language policy document in South Australia was that prepared by the Ministerial Taskforce to Investigate Multiculturalism and Education in 1984 *Education for a Cultural Democracy*. It reported on all levels of education from pre-school to university. Many of its recommendations, such as making the study of another language part of the curriculum for all students, the creation of the South Australian School of Languages and the establishment of the Ethnic Schools' Board, were accepted by the government and funded over the following years.

The key Language Policy recommendation stated that all primary students would study a language other than English as part of their formal education by 1995 and all secondary students would have the opportunity to study a LOTE. All students from non-English speaking backgrounds were to have the opportunity to study their home language whenever possible, and students from English speaking backgrounds would study a language other than English. Vietnamese was given quite a significant place in the implementation of this policy. It was classified as one of the eight priority languages in South Australia. As a result, a number of primary and secondary schools started to teach Vietnamese both as a mother tongue maintenance program and a second language program in State schools as well as Catholic schools, from mid-1980's.

Over many years, especially under the chairmanship of Professor JJ Smolicz, The Multicultural Education Co-ordinating Committee (MECC) played a vital role in the promotion of language and multicultural education programs in South Australian schools. Although MECC changed its name to Multicultural Education Committee (MEC) in 2000, it continued to function as a Ministerial Advisory Committee and make an important contribution to policy development and teaching practice in the area of language education in South Australia up to 2012. Under the auspices of MEC, a

number of policy documents related to the organisation of languages education across the State, Catholic and Independent school sector were developed. These included (1) *Linking People through Languages*, (2) *Languages Policy: Educating for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, (3) *System-Wide Management for the Provision of Languages Other than English*.

MECC was strongly supportive of Vietnamese language and culture promotion in South Australia. MECC grants helped to introduce Vietnamese language programs at tertiary level in South Australia through the former College of Advanced Education in 1987, and continued its support for the Vietnamese program at the University of Adelaide until 2001, when it was closed. As part of its schools' participation in community festival program, MECC provided funds to the Vietnamese community, through the South Australian Vietnamese Teachers Association Inc, to run an annual program of activities for school students to learn about and to participate in the Vietnamese Full-Moon Festival celebration. This was a wonderful way to help students to appreciate and experience other people's cultures and to prepare them to become good citizens of an Australian multicultural society.

In South Australia, the Ethnic Schools' Board (ESB) and Ethnic Schools' Association Inc. (ESA) were very active in the promotion of the ethnic schools programs. These two bodies worked very hard to raise the status and quality of the ethnic school programs in South Australia by lobbying the State Government to provide extra funding to ethnic schools, by running professional development programs for teachers and also by providing assistance to ethnic school authorities with administration matters. As a result, ethnic schools in South Australia were officially recognised by the Government as "complementary providers" of language education along with the State Department of Education, the Catholic and other Independent school sectors. In the early 1980's South Australia was the only state in which ethnic schools could prepare students for the examination of Vietnamese as a Year 12 subject (SACE stage 2) counted towards the South Australian Certificate of Education (equivalent to high school certificates in other states).

The Vietnamese language has been well supported in the ethnic school system in South Australia. In fact, it had the largest ethnic school program in the state for the period from 1993 - 2003 with more than 2,000 students studying Vietnamese each year, as described earlier in this chapter.

## **Queensland**

The first comprehensive policy on languages other than English became available in Queensland in 1991. This policy set out six principles for the long-term development of LOTEs in Queensland schools: (1) expansion of the teaching of LOTEs in schools, (2) continuation in learning languages, (3) quality in learning and teaching, (4) diversity in methods and materials, (5) balance among languages, and (6) integration of language teaching and other studies. This policy also aimed at extending compulsory second language learning gradually to reach the level of Years 3-10. In 1993, Vietnamese was included in the list of eight priority languages in Queensland. However, as the Council of Australian Government (COAG 1994) Report on Asian Languages and Australia's Economic Future only proposed four languages for wider teaching in Australia namely Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Indonesian, and Korean, Vietnamese was excluded from this list. Therefore, it was not sufficiently supported in Queensland although in terms of the Vietnamese population in the State, the proportion is similar to that in South Australia. As a result of community lobbying, Vietnamese was accepted as a subject for Year 12 certificate in Queensland in 1995 with a small number of students enrolled in the subject each year.

## **Western Australia**

In 1991, Western Australia released its first LOTE Strategic Plan which was reviewed two years later. This plan aimed to introduce languages other than English into primary and secondary schools progressively so that by 1999, LOTE education would be available to all students. Each school was to choose the language to be taught. Aboriginal languages, Chinese, Japanese, French, German, Indonesian and Italian were selected as the target languages in Western Australia.

Although the size of the Vietnamese community in Western Australia was relatively large at the time of this research (around 15,000 people), the Vietnamese language has never been taught in either government or Catholic schools in this state. So far, Vietnamese has not been accepted as a subject for high school certificate or university entrance in Western Australia. Vietnamese was taught at the University of Western Australia for a number of years in the past but the course has now been discontinued. In 2005, Vietnamese was only being taught through the ethnic schools, organised by voluntary community groups.

### **Tasmania, Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory**

As the Vietnamese population in these territories was very small, the Vietnamese language had not been given any consideration in their language policy planning. In 2005 Vietnamese was not being taught in any school in Tasmania or in the Northern Territory. In the Australian Capital City, a small Vietnamese program was offered at the Australian National University and there was one Vietnamese ethnic school organised by a Vietnamese parents' group with ninety-seven students studying Vietnamese there.

Evidence from the above descriptions of each state point to the conclusion that the Vietnamese language position in both national and state language policies in Australia does not have the academic standing of other Asian languages such as Japanese and Chinese which are widely available in universities and schools as a second language to students of mainstream Australian or ethnic backgrounds. Vietnamese as a community language has been given a significant place in the language policies and planning in only two states: Victoria and South Australia. Consequently, Vietnamese language programs in mainstream schools, as well as in ethnic schools, in these two states have been well developed. The position of Vietnamese language within New South Wales language policy should be more prominent, as New South Wales had the largest Vietnamese population, over 60,000 persons, compared to other states in Australia.

For the benefit of Australia as a multicultural country and for its effective educational and trade connections with Vietnam, the Vietnamese language should be given a more prominent place in the language education policy planning in all states and territories of Australia. Vietnam has become a popular tourist destination for many Australians, and education and trade exchange between Australia and Vietnam has also increased enormously over the years.

## **Vietnamese in the Language Policy of France**

### **Languages in French Society**

French is the official language for professional, administrative and legal purposes in France and this applies also to the territories of for example, Polynesia, and to the French Administrative Departments overseas such as Guadeloupe. Other languages are not officially recognised in public affairs and French legislation condemns the use of

foreign words in advertising. According to Dickins & Cumming (1996), this measure was established in the late 1990's less by a distrust of other languages than by a concern to preserve the quality of the French language.

However, some regional languages remain alive in France: Alsatian, near the German border, Basque in the south-west, Breton in the west, Corsican on the Island of Corsica and Occitan in the south. Speakers of all of these languages are bilingual since they have complete mastery of French. This is not always the case, however, with speakers of languages such as Tahitian and Creole, in the overseas Departments and Territories of France. Nor is it the case of first or even second or third generations of ethnic minority groups, among whom many Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Polish, speakers of different forms of Arabic, and speakers of other African languages such as peoples from Zaire and Rwanda, still have difficulties in speaking the standard form of French. Many first generation Vietnamese, especially those who came to France as refugees after 1975, still do not speak French at all. Well educated and professional Vietnamese and their children master French perfectly.

Unlike Australia, where the population census includes questions on ancestry and language spoken at home, French law does not permit questions leading to the identification of ethnic origin in its census surveys. Thus, it was very difficult to estimate the number of speakers of the languages of immigrant groups in France, including the Vietnamese, at the time of this research. The number of first generation migrants, those born overseas, and those residing in France can be identified, but all their children born in France were assumed to be French, and French-speaking, although it was known that French was not always spoken in the home, even by second and third generation immigrants. This was and continued to be the situation among members of the Vietnamese community in France.

## **Language Education System in France**

### **Secondary Schools**

According to Dickins and Cumming (1996), two foreign languages were compulsory in lower secondary level in France (age 11 to 15), and in some sections of the upper secondary (age 16 to 18) a third foreign language was optional. All students in upper secondary were required to learn at least one foreign language, often a continuation of

their study of English. At the beginning of Grade 5, (age 11), students had to choose their first foreign language. Most chose English (87.9 % in 1994); German was the second most popular choice (11.1%) followed by Spanish. Very small numbers chose other languages, for example Spanish, Italian, Literary Arabic, Chinese, Modern Hebrew, Japanese, Dutch, Polish, Portuguese or Russian. At the beginning of Grade 7 (age 13), students had to choose a second foreign language, most often Spanish (57%), German (23%). English (14 %), or Italian (5%). The remaining 1% chose the less common languages from among those listed above as first foreign languages. The choice of languages was extremely wide in theory, but in practice most schools offered only English, German and Spanish, with an additional option, which was usually Italian, Portuguese or Russian. There were three hours on average of foreign language teaching each week, or five hours for students taking the intensive language option. This allocation of time constituted about 8% of curriculum time for each language learnt.

### **Primary Schools**

In 1989, foreign language learning was introduced into primary schools (Grades 1 to 5, age 6 to 10). Only 28% of schools in the state sector, and 48% of private schools provided this option; and, where it was available, 56% of pupils in grade 5 and 27% in grade 4 were involved in learning a foreign language. At both these levels, pupils undertook normal language learning (not just language awareness), with a time allocation of one-and-a-half hours per week. The teaching was carried out by qualified language teachers, and the funding was provided by the local authorities.

In 1995 there was a plan to introduce pupils in Grade 2, (age 7) to a foreign language through daily audio-visual presentations lasting a quarter of an hour. The cost of this initiative, and its continuation in the primary sector, was to be borne by the State. In 1994-95, 72% of primary pupils learning a language studied English, 23% German, 3% Spanish and 2% Italian (Dickson & Cumming, 1996)

### **Foreign Languages as the Medium of Instruction in France**

In some cases, foreign languages had been taught as the medium of instruction, mostly in upper secondary school. One example was the European schools, established for children of parents who work for the European Community. The curricula were quite distinctive and lead to the European Baccalaureate, a qualification which was

recognised throughout the European Union. There were similar programs set up also through the Franco-German lycées (one in France, the other two in Germany), where the curriculum was taught in French and German, and accredited as a Franco-German Baccalaureate, recognised in both countries. There were a few lycées in France and in Germany where an exchange of teachers allowed for the teaching of language, literature, history and geography in the language of the other country. This, through a combined curriculum, led either to the baccalaureate or to the Abitur which is the German equivalent of the Year 12 Certificate of Education or High School Certificate (HSC) in Australia.

Finally, there were special sections in some mainstream secondary schools, where foreign languages were the medium of instruction. In a small number of cases international sections were created. These covered ten different languages. Curricula were modified to accommodate the teaching of literature, history and geography by foreign teachers, using their own language. These courses normally led to the French baccalaureate which qualified candidates seeking entry to universities in partner countries. They could also lead to the International Baccalaureate. In 1992, European sections were created to extend these opportunities. In this case, teachers and students were mainly French, but a foreign language (usually a European language) was used for non-linguistic subjects, including science. Students in these programs were given a special credit in the baccalaureate. In 1994-95, 450 secondary schools were taking part in this scheme, which, at that time, featured nine foreign languages.

### **No Official Place for the Vietnamese Language**

It is notable that the Vietnamese language was not mentioned in any of the French official language policy documents. Vietnamese was neither listed as a foreign language nor as an immigrant language that students, especially those of Vietnamese background, could study during their primary or secondary years of education in France. Children of Vietnamese background were thus, linguistically and culturally disadvantaged, in the French education system, compared to children of other immigrant groups, such as Spanish, Italian, Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Dutch, Polish, Portuguese or Russian, whose languages were taught in some schools as foreign languages.

In 1996 when the researcher interviewed a senior officer from the Ministry of Education for this study, she brought up the issue of linguistic rights for children of



Vietnamese background, the answer was categorically along the lines of the saying: "When in Rome, do as the Romans do". Then he continued "When the Vietnamese are in France, they have to learn French and speak French". The researcher could not resist replying "Except when the French were in Vietnam, they did not learn Vietnamese or behave like the Vietnamese, on the contrary, they expected the Vietnamese people to adopt French as the official and administrative language in Vietnam". The interviewer did not choose to take up this point and the interview concluded on this rather negative note. It appeared that the French colonial imperialist attitude towards the Vietnamese people and their language was very much alive in France at the time.

## Conclusion

Thus, in comparing the situation of teaching and learning Vietnamese in France to that in Australia, based on the information described above, it is possible to make the following concluding points.

- The teaching and learning of Vietnamese in France were totally different from the Australian situation, in states like Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales which have supported the teaching of Vietnamese.
- The Vietnamese language was far better supported by the Australian Government than by the French Government. This could be due the fact that in Australia over the last few decades there has been a reasonably well accepted multicultural policy whereas France has never adopted such a policy. Consequently, the Vietnamese language has been recognised as an important community language, in all statements of Australian language policy. Although the official position of Vietnamese language in the language policies and in the wider community was relatively restricted in Australia, it was given far more recognition and funding support compared to the situation in France where Vietnamese language was not even given recognition as a foreign language in its school curriculum.
- Community efforts towards the maintenance of Vietnamese language and culture was equally strong in both countries, as demonstrated through the organisation of and support for numerous Vietnamese ethnic schools and Vietnamese language classes in both countries. However, the Vietnamese ethnic schools in Australia were much better organised and better resourced, compared

to those in France, since the ethnic school system is funded by the Australian Government on a limited but equitable scale. The ethnic school system has been recognised as a complementary provider of language education in Australia, while in France the ethnic school system was neither funded nor recognised by the French educational authorities. Vietnamese language classes in France totally depended on the voluntary service of the Vietnamese community or religious groups.

- The Vietnamese language has been taught in some mainstream primary or secondary schools from Reception to Year 12 level in Australia whereas in France, the researcher was unable to find any official evidence of Vietnamese being available anywhere in the school system, at any year level, during the entire period of primary and secondary education. There were private colleges or institutions which offered Vietnamese as a fee-paying course, mainly for adults for commercial purposes only. In Australia, Vietnamese language programs in schools have been focussing more on its maintenance role than for trade or commercial purposes.
- Vietnamese language has been accepted as a high school certificate (end of Year 12 subject) in Australia since the early 1980s, many participants from the QAY group completed Year 12 Vietnamese program while none of the participants in the QF group in France completed year 12 Vietnamese at the time, although some parents claimed that Vietnamese was accepted as a subject for the French Baccalaureate.
- France has a long tradition of teaching Vietnamese language, literature and culture at universities as a foreign language. These courses were fully developed from undergraduate level to post-graduate level including PhD research degree in Vietnamese Studies, whereas Australia only started to introduce Vietnamese Studies at tertiary level in the 1980's. Currently (2005) there are only two Australian universities offering Vietnamese to a small number of undergraduate students and the future of these courses is very uncertain.
- In Australia, bilingual childcare services, as well as Vietnamese interpreting and translating services, are available for Vietnamese people in almost all states and territories and these services are provided almost free of charge. Such services are not available in France. Thus, Vietnamese people have to rely on relatives and friends to help them. This also means that in France, young children have

less opportunity to learn or maintain their Vietnamese language when they start going to childcare or pre-school centres.

- Attitudes of people in the wider community towards the Vietnamese language and culture are more positive in Australia than in France. Vietnamese students in Australia are encouraged to keep their Vietnamese names, to wear their traditional costumes in appropriate situations, and to celebrate their festivals with other students in schools whereas in France they are not allowed to do so. One still remembers the well-publicised ruling that female Muslim students were not allowed to wear a head-scarf to school.

The facts revealed in this chapter clearly indicate that, in terms of educational policies and practices, a child born of Vietnamese parents in Australia would have a better chance to maintain and develop the Vietnamese language and culture skills and knowledge than a child born of Vietnamese parents living in France.

## **Chapter 6: Vietnamese Linguistic System: Language Maintenance in Australia and in France**

### ***Introduction***

In this chapter the researcher firstly, gives a brief overview of the history of the development of the Vietnamese language and secondly, examines the question of Vietnamese language maintenance among the respondents both in the Australian and French contexts. Relevant points of language maintenance theory, as discussed in the Literature Review, of Chapter 2 are used to illuminate the set of cultural and concrete data obtained through oral memoirs, interviews, questionnaires and other community sources.

### ***Brief Overview of the Vietnamese Language***

Vietnamese is the national language spoken by 83.5 million people in Vietnam (CIA, 2005), as well as more than two million Vietnamese immigrants living in many countries around the world, especially the United States, Canada, France and Australia. As with the origin of the Vietnamese people themselves, the origin of the Vietnamese language remains a matter of debate but it is generally accepted to be a mixture of Austro-Asiatic languages sharing many similarities with the Mon-Khmer, Thai and Mường languages.

### **Origin**

The Vietnamese language is not recognised as having its origins in the Chinese language, although the present-day Vietnamese language incorporates thousands of Chinese words, which came into the language during the years of Chinese colonial domination from 207 BC to AD 939 and through the influence of the Chinese classics. Chinese was used in official documents, imperial examinations and in literature, not only during the period of Chinese domination but also for more than nine centuries after Vietnam gained independence from China. According to a well-known Vietnamese author, Dương Quảng Hàm (1968: 203), literary works written by Vietnamese scholars in Chinese are more numerous than those written in "Chữ Nôm" which was a Vietnamese writing system developed from different combinations of Chinese characters. This writing system, which was mainly used for literature, lasted until the beginning of the twentieth century.

It is certain that the present day Vietnamese language is a blend of several foreign languages, namely Chinese, and to a lesser degree, French, English and more recently Russian. Loan-words, loan-morphemes and loan-translation are the main devices used in creating new words with materials borrowed from foreign languages. Chinese and French have been the two main sources of linguistic borrowings for the Vietnamese Language. The following are a few examples of borrowed words.

*Xà Phòng* (soap), borrowed from French word *savon*;

*Ôc-xy-hóa* (to become), a new combination from a French morpheme *oxygene* with the Chinese morpheme 化;

*Cao bồi* (cowboy), a literal translation of the English word;

The majority of lexical items borrowed from Chinese belong to the vocabulary in the fields of politics, science, literature and technology, for example:

Vietnamese	Chinese
<i>Kinh tế</i> (economics)	经济
<i>Hóa học</i> (chemistry)	化学
<i>Khí</i> (hydrogen)	气

Almost all borrowed words in Vietnamese undergo phonological change and, to a certain extent, semantic modification or restriction. They are all very much "Vietnamised" and have become an accepted part of the Vietnamese linguistic heritage.

## Other Ethnic Languages and Dialects in Vietnam

Vietnam has many ethnic minorities such as the Chinese, the Thượng, the Mường, the Mèo, the Mán, the Thái, the Chăm and the Cambodian, etc... Each ethnic group speaks its own distinct language, often with accompanying dialects. Apart from more than seventy-nine languages of ethnic minorities and tribal groups, some linguists say that Vietnamese has three major dialects: Northern, Central and Southern. However, these are not dialects in the real sense because it is basically the same language but with phonological and lexical differences between the North, South and Centre. Although these differences do not prevent Vietnamese people from understanding each other, they help to identify the locality where the speaker comes from. Tones, for example, are not uniform. The Northern Vietnamese has six tones while the Central and Southern Vietnamese have only five tones, as phonologically the latter groups do not distinguish between tone "ngã ~" and tone "hỏi ?".

## The Vietnamese Alphabet

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the Vietnamese people have been using only one writing system, which is phonetically Romanized with an alphabet consisting of twenty-nine basic letters: twelve vowels and seventeen consonants as in *Table 6.1* below.

*Table 6.1 Vietnamese Alphabet*

<b>a</b>	<b>ă</b>	<b>â</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>c</b>	<b>d</b>	<b>đ</b>	<b>e</b>	<b>ê</b>	<b>g</b>	<b>h</b>
<b>i</b>	<b>k</b>	<b>l</b>	<b>m</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>o</b>	<b>ô</b>	<b>ơ</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>q</b>	<b>r</b>
<b>s</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>u</b>	<b>ư</b>	<b>v</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>y</b>				

### Vowels

There are twelve vowels in the Vietnamese alphabet but the letters "y" and "i" have the same pronunciation. The vowels of Vietnamese are by and large similar to parallel vowels in English as illustrated in *Table 6.2*.

*Table 6.2 Vietnamese Vowels*

<b>Letters</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Rough English equivalent sound</b>
<b>a</b>	<b>ca</b>	sing	as in 'father'
<b>ă</b>	<b>ăn</b>	eat	as in 'hat'
<b>â</b>	<b>tâm</b>	heart	as in 'mum'
<b>e</b>	<b>xe</b>	vehicle	as in 'bet'
<b>ê</b>	<b>đê</b>	dike	as in 'eh'
<b>i/y</b>	<b>đi / ly</b>	go / glass	as in 'bee'
<b>o</b>	<b>lo</b>	to worry	as in 'law'
<b>ô</b>	<b>vô</b>	enter	as the 'o' in 'obey'
<b>ơ</b>	<b>tơ</b>	Silk	as in 'fur'
<b>u</b>	<b>xu</b>	cent	as in 'through'
<b>ư</b>	<b>tư</b>	fourth	as in 'uh-uh'

*Source: (Tran thi Nien with reference to Phan văn Giưỡng, Vietnamese for Beginners 1990, p.2)*

### Consonants and Consonant Clusters

Vietnamese consonants are for the most part roughly similar to parallel consonants in English. However, their distribution, their occurrence, as either the initial or the final letter in syllables, often differs from that of English. The pronunciation of Vietnamese consonants differs in subtle but noticeable ways from the pronunciation of their English counterparts as illustrated in the following *Table 6.3*.

Table 6. 3 Vietnamese Consonants

Letter	Position	Example	Sound
<b>b</b>	initial	ba 'three'	<i>b</i> as in boy
<b>c</b>	initial & final	ca 'sing'	<i>k</i> as in can
<b>ch</b>	initial & final	cho 'give'	<i>ch</i> as in chop
<b>d or gi</b>	initial	da 'skin' or giá 'price'	<i>z</i> as in zoo
<b>đ</b>	initial	đi 'go'	<i>d</i> as in do
<b>g</b>	initial	gà 'chicken'	<i>g</i> as in game
<b>gh</b>	initial before e, ê and i	ghi chú 'to note'	<i>g</i> as in game
<b>h</b>	initial	ho 'cough'	<i>h</i> as in hat
<b>k</b>	initial before e, ê and i/y only	ký 'sign'	<i>k</i> as in kilo
<b>l</b>	initial	làm 'work'	<i>l</i> as in lime
<b>m</b>	initial & final	mà 'but'	<i>m</i> as in man
<b>n</b>	initial & final	non 'young'	<i>n</i> as in no
<b>ng</b>	initial & final	Nga 'name'	<i>ng</i> as in singer
<b>ngh</b>	initial before e, ê and i only	nghe 'listen'	<i>ng</i> as in singer
<b>nh</b>	initial & final	nhà 'house'	<i>ny</i> as in canyon
<b>p</b>	final	tháp 'tower'	<i>p</i> as in top
<b>ph</b>	initial	phá 'destroy'	<i>ph</i> as in photo
<b>qu</b>	initial always combined with u	qua 'cross'	<i>kw</i> as in squire
<b>r</b>	initial	ra 'get out'	<i>r</i> as in raw
<b>s</b>	initial	say 'drunk'	<i>sh</i> as in show
<b>t</b>	initial & final	ta 'I'	<i>t</i> as in top
<b>th</b>	initial	thương 'love'	<i>th</i> as in thick
<b>tr</b>	initial	trà 'tea'	<i>tr</i> as in tree
<b>v</b>	initial	vai 'shoulder'	<i>v</i> as in van
<b>x</b>	initial	xe 'car'	<i>s</i> as in son

Source: (Tran thi Nien with reference to Phan văn Giưỡng, Vietnamese for Beginners 1990, p.3)

## Formation of Vietnamese Words

Vietnamese is a monosyllabic language. This means that each word generally consists of only one syllable. A Vietnamese single word can be formed in one of the following four ways:

- 1) A vowel or a vowel cluster with or without a tone mark.

Example:            **ô!**        (oh!)

**ao**        (pond)

**áo**        (shirt)

- 2) A vowel or a vowel cluster with or without a tone mark plus a final consonant.

Example:            **em**        (younger sibling)

**uống**    (drink)

**oan**        (unjust)

- 3) An initial consonant plus a vowel or a vowel cluster with or without tone marks

Example:        *tôi*     (*I*)  
                      *la*       (*shout*)  
                      *lời*      (*interest*)

- 4) An initial consonant plus a vowel or a vowel cluster with or without tone marks and a final consonant.

e.g.            *canh*   (*soup*)  
                      *mượn* (*borrow*)  
                      *cam*    (*orange*)

**Compound Words.** Although from the phonological point of view, Vietnamese is classified as a monosyllabic and tonal language, it has a sizeable number of compound words. Often two words function together as compounds similar to English compounds such as “orange juice” or “airport”.

e.g.            *ăn uống*   (*eating*)  
                      *nước cam*   (*orange juice*)

Most compound words are formed with a root word borrowed from Chinese

e.g.            *phi-trường* (*airport*)  
                      *cách-mạng* (*revolution*)  
                      *kinh tế học* (*economics*).

Other compounds are onomatopoeic words such as ‘*lóc-cóc*’ (*knock-knock*) and ‘*cạp-cạp*’ (*quack-quack*) or what linguists call reduplicative syllables like ‘*dễ-dàng*’ (*easy*), ‘*sạch-sẽ*’ (*clean*) and ‘*xanh-xanh*’ (*greenish*). These compounds are spelled with hyphens as above in formal contexts such as textbooks; in informal contexts such as letters, the hyphens are often omitted. It should also be noted that Vietnamese words never change in number, gender, person or tense. Plurality, for example, in Vietnamese is expressed by a number of words called plural markers and the same procedure is used to indicate gender, person and tense, where these are needed.

## Phonological System

Vietnamese is essentially a monosyllabic tonal language. Each syllable can be pronounced in six different tones to confer six totally different meanings. The tones are expressed by five diacritical accents and one atomic where the syllable has no accent. The tone marks are placed over or under single vowels or main stressed vowels in vowel clusters as illustrated by Phan văn Giưỡng (1990) in the following *Table 6.4*.



Table 6. 4 Tonemes in the Vietnamese Sound System.

Vietnamese name	Tone mark	Tone level	Description	Example	Meaning
Không dấu	A	Mid-level	Voice starts at about the middle of the normal speaking voice range (3) and remains at approximately the same level except before a pause.	ma	ghost
Dấu sắc	Á	High-rising	Voice starts high (4) and rises sharply. This tone is loud and tense.	má	cheek
Dấu huyền	À	Low-falling	Voice starts at a fairly low (2) and falls gradually.	mà	but
Dấu nặng	Ạ	Low-broken	Voice starts a little below the middle of the voice range, falls immediately, then rises to a somewhat higher point, and finally is cut off abruptly.	mạ	rice-seedling
Dấu hỏi	Ã	Low-rising	Voice starts quite low, dips slightly and then rises rather slowly to a somewhat higher level.	mã	tomb
Dấu ngã	Ẻ	High-broken	Voice starts just a little above the normal speaking voice range, dips down a very little, then rises abruptly.	mẽ	horse

Source: Phan văn Giưỡng, *Vietnamese for Beginners 1990*, p.5

### Tone Symbols

The six tones just described are summarized in the following *Chart 6.1* to illustrate the differences between them as they are associated with individual words. These tones give spoken Vietnamese a musical quality, very pleasant to hear, but quite difficult for non-native speakers to pronounce them with clear distinction.

Chart 6. 1 Vietnamese Tone Symbols

		Mid level	High rising	Low falling	Low broken	Low rising	High broken
		Không dấu	Dấu sắc	Dấu huyền	Dấu nặng	Dấu hỏi	Dấu ngã
5	High						
4							
3	Mid						
2	Low						
1							

Source: Phan Văn Giưỡng, *Vietnamese for Beginners-1990*, p.5

## Vietnamese Writing System

### Chữ Nôm (Demotic writing)

As previously mentioned, the Chinese influence during the first centuries of Vietnam's history led to the extensive use of Chinese characters known as "Chữ Nho" in Vietnam, even for some decades after independence was regained in the 10th century. Realising the need and advantages of developing a separate written Vietnamese language, Vietnamese scholars had made several attempts to modify the original Chinese characters but it was a 13th century poet, Nguyễn Thuyên who managed to incorporate the previous efforts into a distinct but very complicated script known as "Chữ Nôm" or demotic writing. (Example of a text written in "Chữ Nôm", Appendix 12)

"Chữ Nôm" aims to represent Vietnamese speech but still uses symbols borrowed from Chinese characters. Dương Quảng Hàm (1968: 114-6) explained that the formation of "Chữ Nôm" made use of Chinese characters, either singly or in various combinations, in the three following ways:

#### 1) Single character

- a) A Vietnamese word, originating from a single Chinese character, and the sound and the meaning remain the same.

eg: 才 *tài* (talent)

- b) A Vietnamese word, originating from Chinese, but has a pronunciation that is slightly different.

eg: 局 *cục* pronounced as *cuộc* (office)

- c) A Vietnamese word, originating from Chinese, but has a completely different pronunciation so that only the meaning is retained.

eg: 几 *kỷ* pronounced as *ghế* (chair)

- d) A Vietnamese word in which the sound of the Chinese word is retained but the meaning is completely different.

eg: 没 *mất* (to lose) in Chinese

became *một* (number 1) in Vietnamese.

#### 2) Combination of two Chinese characters

One character denotes the meaning and the other denotes the approximate sound giving the Vietnamese pronunciation.

eg: 至 典 *đến* (to arrive) in which 至 *chí* gives the meaning  
and 典 *điển* gives the approximate sound.

南 年 *năm* (year) in which 年 *niên* gives the meaning  
and 南 *năm* gives the approximate sound.

### 3) *Combination of a Chinese character to denote the meaning and a "Chữ Nôm" for the pronunciation*

eg: 口 *lời* (speech) in which 口 *khẩu* gives the meaning  
and 𠂔 *trời* (a Chữ Nôm) gives the approximate pronunciation.

We can see that this writing system is in fact more complicated than Chinese characters themselves because it tries to represent both pronunciation and meaning by separated constituent elements. Although many works of popular literature and non-official documents were written in "Chữ Nôm", it never received official recognition as the national written language form. Therefore, many Vietnamese writers continued to use the Chinese calligraphic script and both writing systems had a parallel existence for several centuries up until the beginning of the twentieth century, when this writing system was replaced by the Romanized writing system called "Chữ Quốc Ngữ".

### **Chữ Quốc Ngữ (National Written Language)**

According to a well-known Vietnamese author, Phạm Quỳnh (Dương Quảng Hàm, 1968: 195-6) the Catholic European missionaries invented the romanized Vietnamese writing system called "Chữ Quốc Ngữ" at the beginning of seventeenth century for evangelization purposes. It was not clear who was the initial inventor of the romanized Vietnamese alphabet and its derived writing system for Vietnamese but it was most likely the result of the work done by a number of missionary priests (Portuguese, Spanish, Italian and French) over a period of time. It is noticeable that there was a strong influence of Portuguese/Spanish and French in the formation of the Vietnamese romanized writing system, especially in its tone mark system: dấu sắc, dấu huyền, dấu mũ correspond to accent aigu (acute accent) accent grave (grave accent) and accent circonflexe (circumflex accent) of the French language, while dấu ngã, dấu hỏi and dấu nặng came probably from the Portuguese or Spanish linguistic systems. It is also certain that the first catechist book written by Alexandre de Rhodes, a French Jesuit missionary, using the Latinized script "Chữ Quốc Ngữ", was published in 1648. He

also published the first Vietnamese-Portuguese-Latin dictionary in "Chữ Quốc Ngữ" in 1651. (Refer to his first manuscript in "Chữ Quốc Ngữ", Appendix 13.).

When "Chữ Quốc Ngữ" was first established, it was used only by the Catholic Church for evangelical purposes but subsequently the French colonial administration used it for maintaining control over the population. Its wide-spread use only became popular a century ago. In 1906, the study of "Chữ Quốc Ngữ" became compulsory in secondary schools and two years later the Royal Court in Huế directed the Ministry of Education to establish a new curriculum entirely in "Chữ Quốc Ngữ". After the triennial literary examinations, based on the Chinese script, were abolished, with the last taking place in the Imperial Court in the city of Huế in 1919, "Chữ Quốc Ngữ" became the National Written Language.

The movement to promote "Chữ Quốc Ngữ" at the beginning of the 20th century was led by two famous Vietnamese scholars namely Nguyễn văn Vĩnh (1882-1936) and Phạm Quỳnh (1892-1945). They were both writers and editors of two historically significant newspapers published in "Chữ Quốc Ngữ", namely "Nam-Phong Tạp Chí" (1917-1934) and "Đông Dương Tạp Chí" (1913-1919) which contributed considerably to "Chữ Quốc Ngữ" at its initial establishment stage. It took fifty years for "Chữ Quốc Ngữ" to become a popular medium of literary creation. Apart from Nguyễn văn Vĩnh and Phạm Quỳnh, there were other pioneers of literature in "Chữ Quốc Ngữ" such as Trương Vĩnh Ký (1837-1898), Huỳnh Tịnh Của (1834-1907), Phan Kế Bính (1857-1921) and Nguyễn Khắc Hiếu (1889-1939).

"Chữ Quốc Ngữ" reached its fully developed stage in the early nineteen thirties, due to the efforts and radical ideas of a group of writers called "Tự Lực Văn Đoàn" led by Nguyễn Tường Tam, whose ambition was to create a strong but independent literature movement written in "Chữ Quốc Ngữ". Many of their works, aiming at social and political reforms, had a very deep influence on the social and political changes in South Vietnam up to 1975. "Tự Lực Văn Đoàn" was also credited with the introduction of a modern form of poetry called "Thơ Mới", freed from the influence of Chinese prosody. Khái Hưng, Thạch-Lam and Hoàng Thi Thơ were well known members of this literary group. "Chữ Quốc Ngữ" has now become an established writing system for Vietnamese. It is in fact the only writing system used by Vietnamese people. Now very

few people can read and write "Chữ Nôm" (demotic writing) or "Chữ Nho" (Chinese characters).

"Chữ Quốc Ngữ" has become over the years a very rich language both culturally and linguistically. It is spoken and learnt not only by Vietnamese people, but also by many non-Vietnamese in various countries in the world today. Interest in Vietnamese language and culture has increased in recent times and is likely to develop even more in the future, as Vietnam is now one of the Asian countries sending a significant number of fee paying students to study in USA, France and Australia. Vietnam, with a population of 82.39 million in 2005, has great potential to become a significant trade partner with Australia and France. "Chữ Quốc Ngữ" is also the only form of the written language that Vietnamese immigrants living in countries such as USA, Canada, France and Australia use. This is the written language that the Vietnamese immigrants wanted to maintain and transmit to their children and future generations. The remainder of this chapter reports a comparative analysis of the data concerning the maintenance of this form of Vietnamese among Vietnamese people who settled in France and Australia.

### ***Vietnamese Language Maintenance in Adelaide and in Paris***

As explained in Chapter 3, this study is grounded in a theoretical framework which views the culture of a group in terms of cultural values. One aim of this study is to explore the extent to which the Vietnamese language can be regarded as a core value of Vietnamese culture. For this reason, the analysis which follows, of the cultural values of the 400 subjects, whose background was described in Chapter 4, starts with an investigation of their linguistic systems at group and personal level. Two Chapters (6 & 7) are devoted to the analysis of this question.

Chapter 6 seeks to construct a comparative linguistic profile of the French and the Australian immigrant respondents (160 from the QAA Australian group and 60 from the French QF group). The analysis is based on their patterns of Vietnamese language proficiency, use and attitudes, as revealed in the questionnaire results and supported by the evidence of oral memoirs as well as other relevant sources of data. Chapter 6 is an attempt to determine whether there was any difference in the degree of linguistic maintenance and transmission among the respondents in the two contexts, namely Adelaide and Paris. This is followed in Chapter 7 by a detailed analysis of the linguistic

and educational experiences of 180 respondents of second generation Vietnamese in Australia (QAY group). Issues discussed in both Chapters (6 & 7) are examined in light of the concepts of group and personal systems of linguistic values, which were discussed in Chapter 3.

Maintenance of an ethnic language may be said to be contingent on at least three aspects of language behaviour:

- (i) **Proficiency:** the ability to speak, read and write it.
- (ii) **Usage:** the act of using it as a means to communicate with others.
- (iii) **Attitude:** feelings about the language which governs the inclination to speak it.

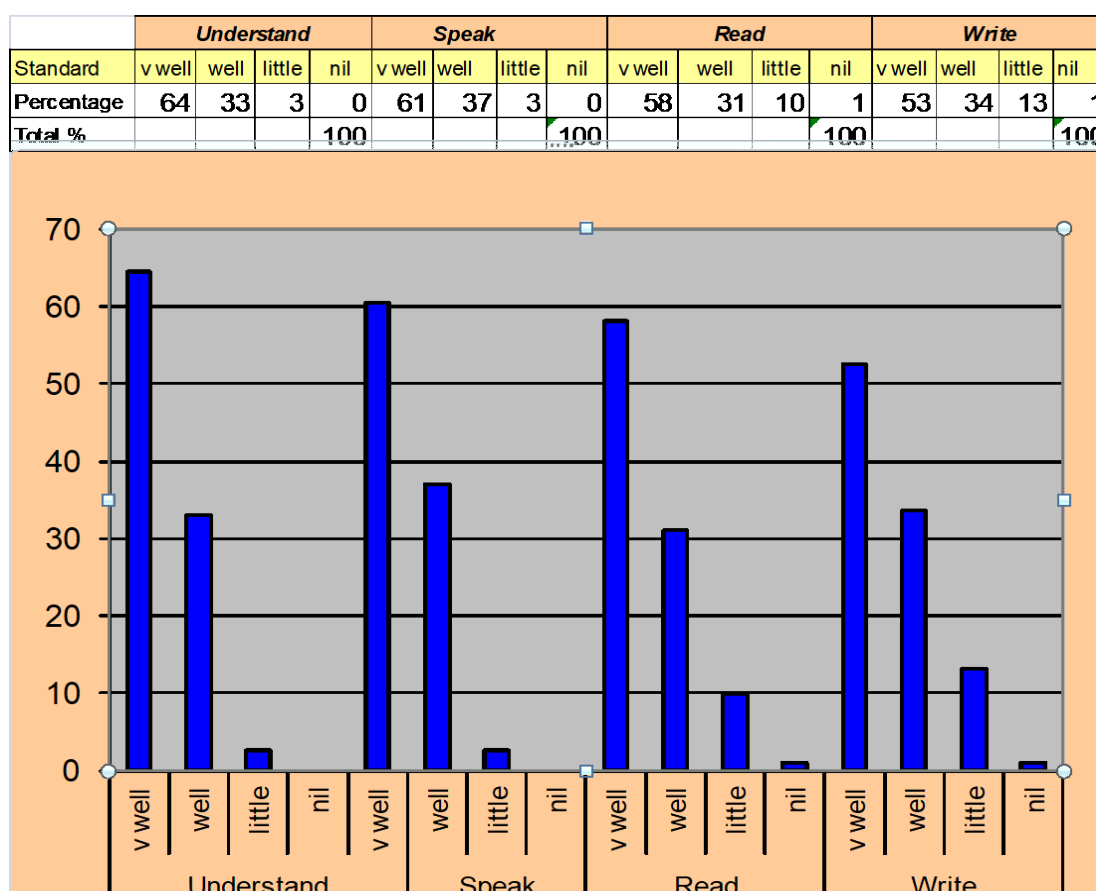
The focus of this chapter was to examine and compare the patterns of language proficiency, usage and attitudes of 160 respondents in the QAA group respondents in Australia with 60 respondents in the QF group in France. Quantitative data derived from their responses to a range of questions on linguistic values in the self-administered questionnaire were interpreted in a comparative manner, and in light of evidence from oral and written memoirs as well as other relevant sources of data such as informal interviews and participant observation evidence. The aim here was to find out whether there was any difference in the patterns of attitudes and tendencies towards Vietnamese language between respondents who had migrated to France, as opposed to those who settled in Australia.

## Language Proficiency of Respondents in Adelaide

**Vietnamese Proficiency in Adelaide - QAA Group.** *Chart 6.2* below shows that the great majority of the Australian respondents in the QAA group were highly competent in all four macro skills of Vietnamese language. All respondents in this group reported that they could *Understand* and *Speak* Vietnamese; only a very small number (1%) did not know how to *Read* or *Write* Vietnamese and a very high majority (87% - 98% ) in this group stated that they could perform *well or very well* in all four macro skills of Vietnamese. This group possessed the highest level of Vietnamese proficiency of all groups of respondents in this study. This finding was also confirmed by evidence from oral memoirs and participant observation. All forty oral memoir contributors from the QAA group chose to be interviewed in Vietnamese and throughout the course of the interview they all showed a very high level of oral competence in Vietnamese. These

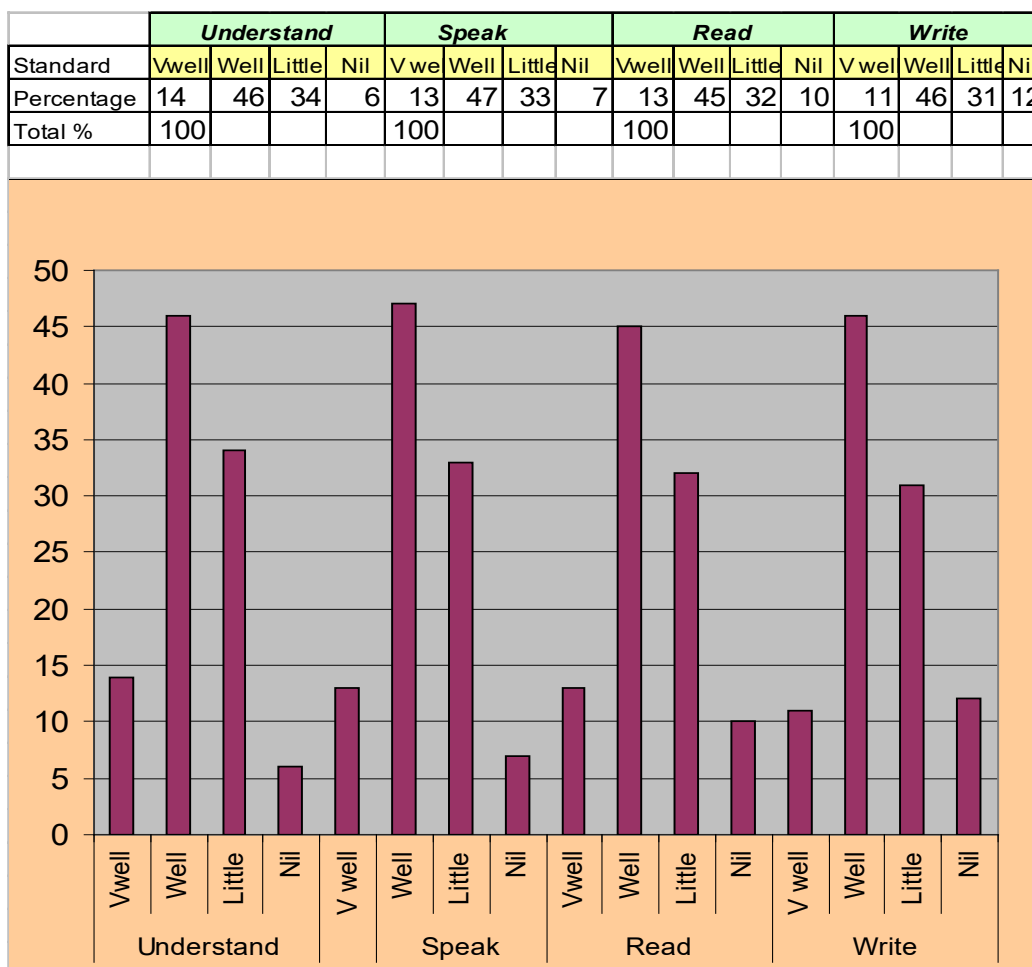
results could be seen as indicative of a high degree of Vietnamese maintenance among respondents in the QAA group in Australia.

*Chart 6. 2 Vietnamese Proficiency - QAA Group (N = 160)*



**English Proficiency in Adelaide- QAA Group.** *Chart 6.3* below shows that English proficiency level of QAA group respondents was relatively high compared to that of the Vietnamese population in Australia at that time (ABS, 2001 Census). More than half (57- 60%) of the group reported that they could use all four macro English skills *well or very well*, although another third of the group rated their competence as *little*. Only a small number of participants (6-12%) reported that they did not *Understand, Speak, Read or Write English at all*, while the total number of those in the Vietnamese-Australian population at the time, who did not speak English at all, was almost triple this (ABS, 2001 Census). This was expected as a large number of participants (30%) in this group belonged to the professional category and had Australian tertiary qualifications. Since English is the official language of Australia, in order to function successfully in their respective professions, they had had to master English well.

**Chart 6. 3 English Proficiency - QAA Group (N=160)**



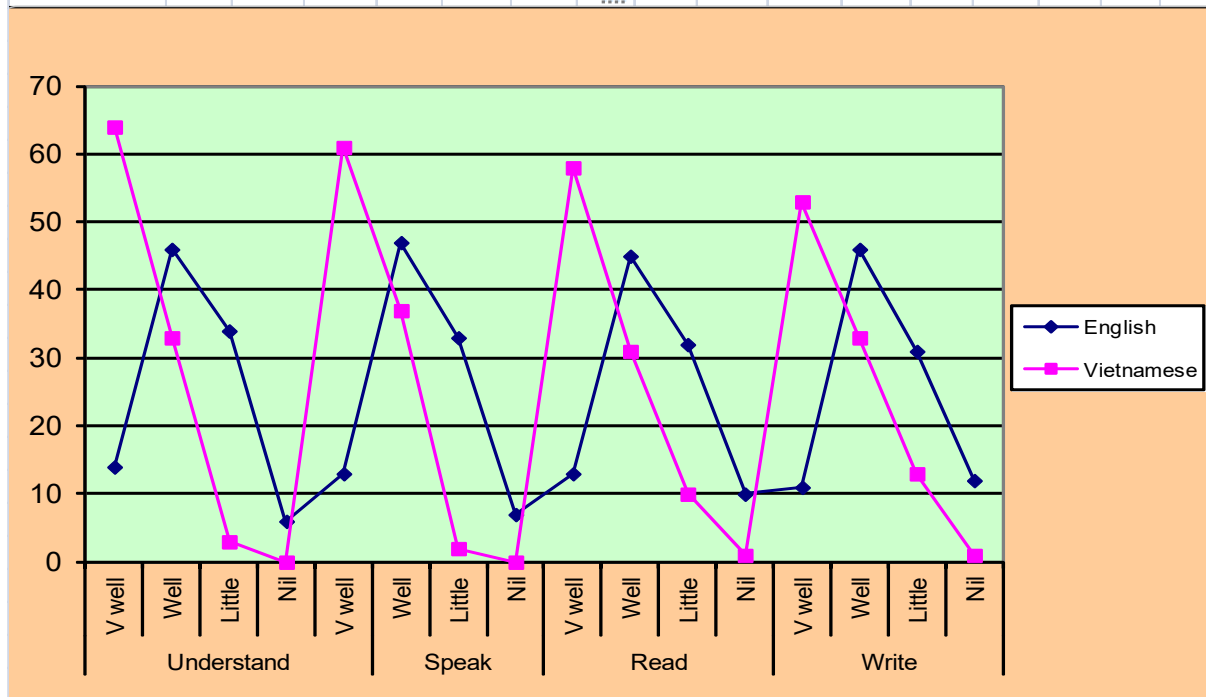
### **English Compared to Vietnamese Proficiency in Adelaide - QAA Group.**

*Chart 6. 4* below shows that, among the QAA group respondents, the percentage of those who could *Understand or Speak* Vietnamese *well or very well* was 37% higher than those who could do so in English. The number of those who could *Read or Write well or very well* was 30% higher in Vietnamese than in English. On the other hand, over one third of QAA group respondents reported their competence in all four macro English skills as *little or nil*, while only a small number (1-13%) reported their competence in Vietnamese as *little or nil*. Thus, the comparison between Vietnamese and English skills revealed that the QAA group respondents overall, possessed a much higher level of proficiency in Vietnamese than in English. It is important to consider also what this means at the level of personal linguistic systems.



**Chart 6. 4 English Compared to Vietnamese Proficiency – QAA Group (N = 160)**

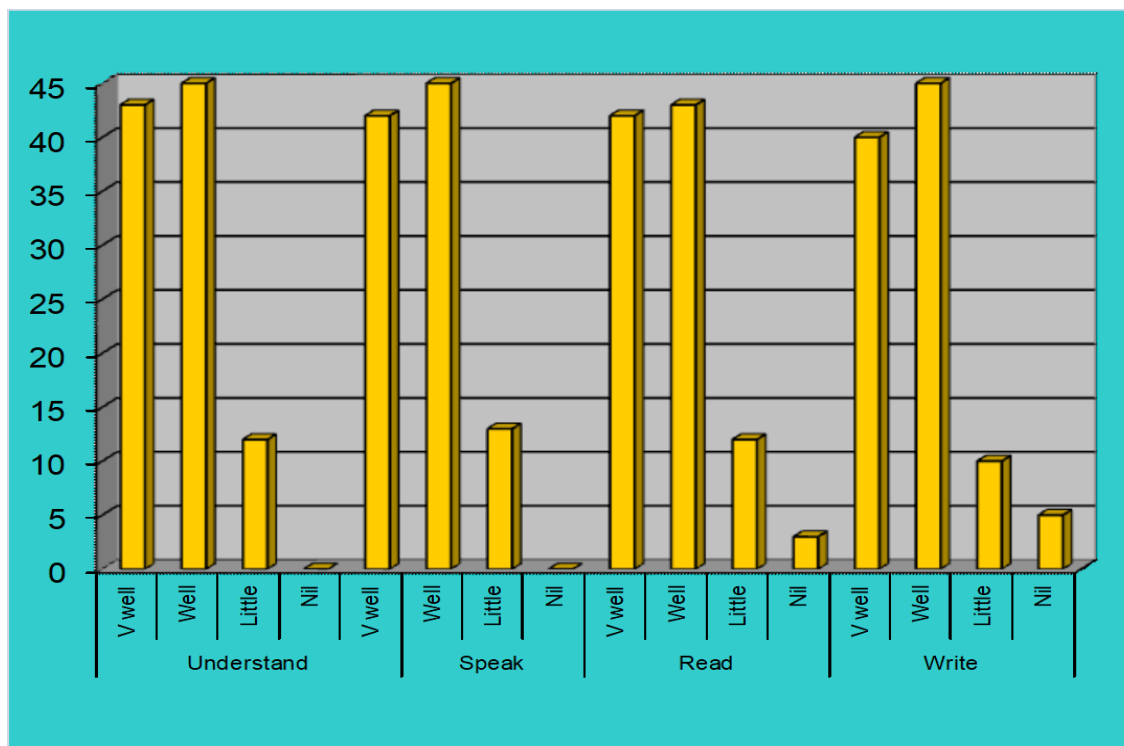
	Understand				Speak				Read				Write			
Standard	V well	Well	Little	Nil	V well	Well	Little	Nil	V well	Well	Little	Nil	V well	Well	Little	Nil
English	14	46	34	6	13	47	33	7	13	45	32	10	11	46	31	12
Vietnamese	64	33	3	0	61	37	2	0	58	31	10	1	53	33	13	1
Total %				100				100				100				100



## Language Proficiency of Respondents in Paris

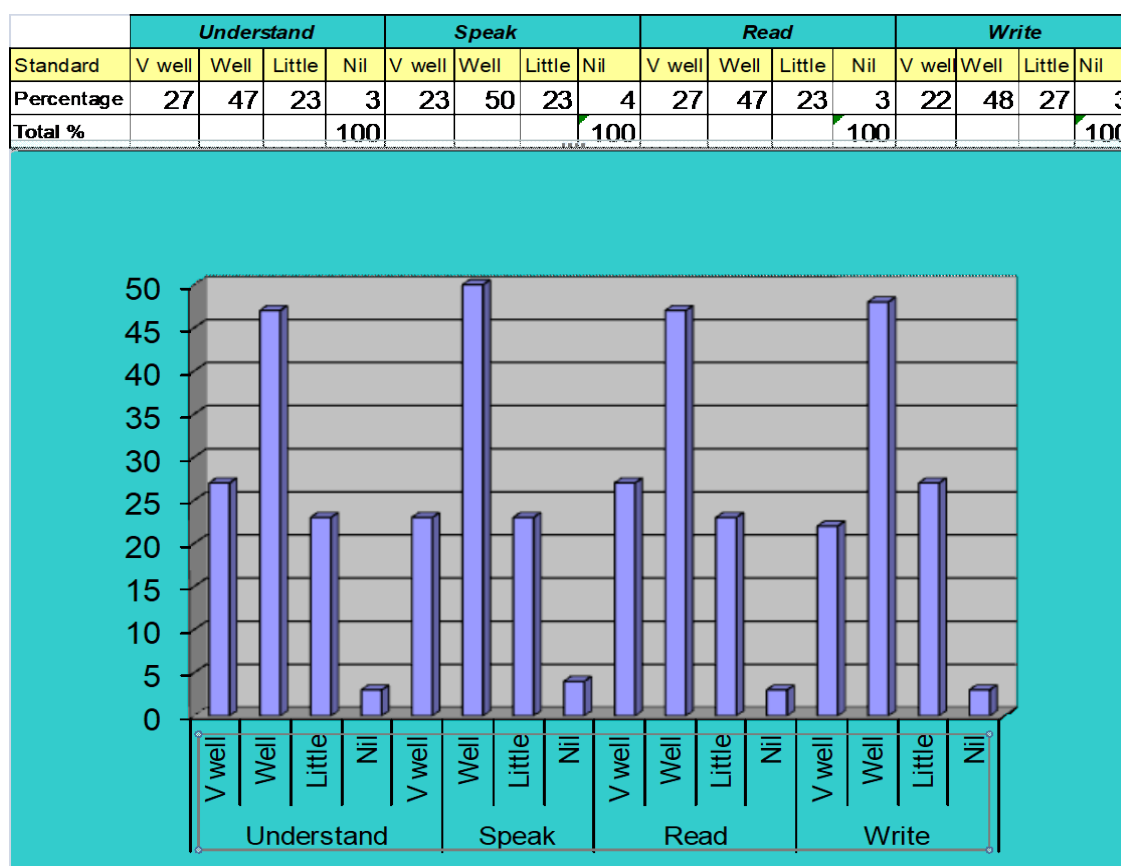
**Vietnamese Proficiency in Paris - QF Group.** *Chart 6. 5* below shows that respondents in the QF group were also highly competent in Vietnamese. All respondents in this group stated that they could *Understand* and *Speak* Vietnamese. More than 80% claimed that they used Vietnamese, in all four macro skills, *well or very well*; a small number (10-12%) rated their competence as *little* and only a very small number (3-5%) did not know how to *Read* or *Write* Vietnamese at all. Thus these figures show that this group still possessed a high level of Vietnamese proficiency.

Chart 6. 5 Vietnamese Proficiency – QF Group (N = 60)

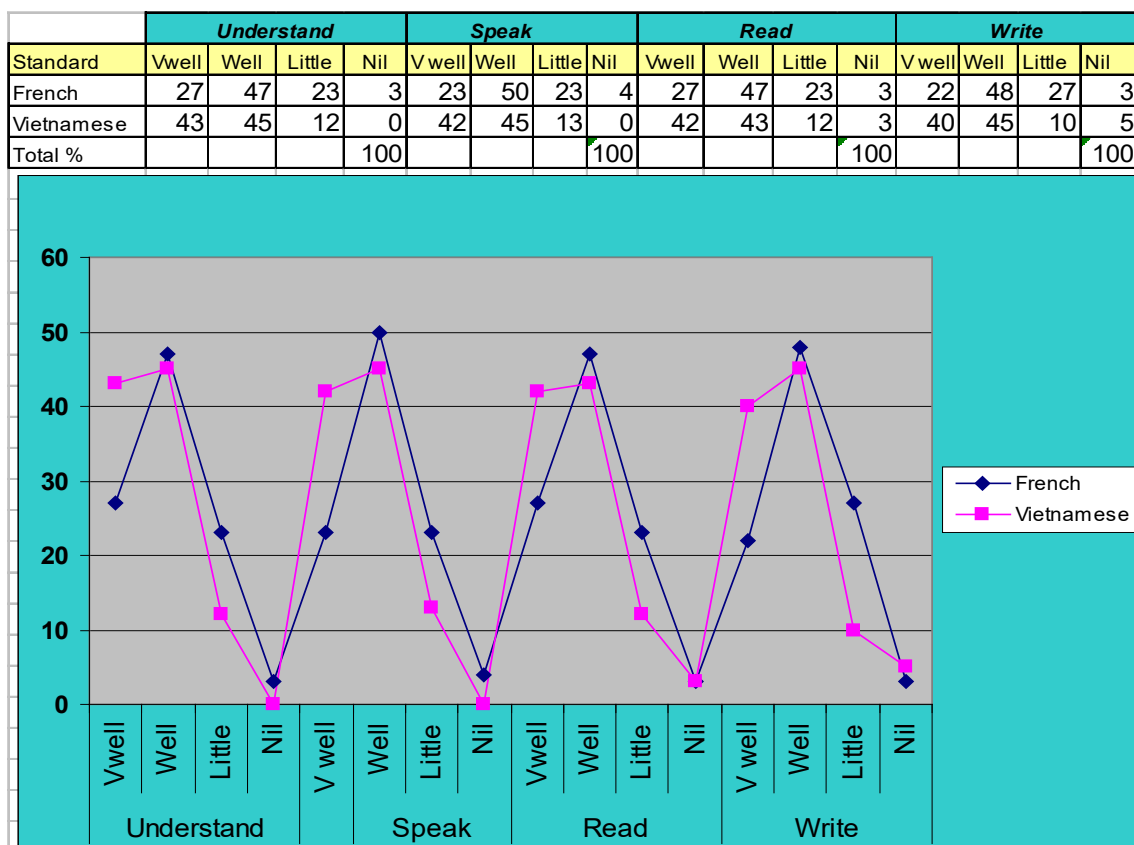


**French Proficiency in Paris - QF Group.** Chart 6.6 below shows that the French proficiency level of QF group respondents was relatively high. More than 70% of the group reported that they could perform *well or very well* in all four French macro skills; another 20% of the group stated that they could *Understand, Speak, Read or Write* French *a little*. Only a small number (3-4%) in this group reported that they did not *Understand, Speak, Read or Write* French at all. This was not a surprising outcome, since 25% of respondents in this group belonged to the professional category. Respondents in this category had to be competent in French in order to be successful as a professional in France. It was also to be expected that the majority of respondents in the QF group would have had a relatively high level of French proficiency before they came to France as students. It must be remembered that French was the language of administration in Vietnam during the French colonial period for about one hundred years, up until the mid 1950's. During this period French was exclusively promoted as the only second language program in the education system in Vietnam. Many of the Vietnamese expatriates, who arrived in France in the mid 1950's, following the withdrawal of the French from Vietnam in 1955, would have been highly competent in French.

Chart 6. 6 French Proficiency - QF group (N= 60)



**French Compared to Vietnamese Proficiency in Paris - QF Group.** Chart 6.7 below shows that, among the QF group respondents, the percentage of those stating that they could *Understand or Speak well or very well* was 14% higher in Vietnamese than in French and those who could *Read or Write well or very well* was 11% higher in Vietnamese than in French. On the other hand, less than a third reported their competence in all four macro French skills as *little or nil* while a relatively smaller number (12-15%) rated their competence in Vietnamese as *little or nil*. Thus, the comparison between Vietnamese and French skills among QF group respondents revealed that this group possessed a slightly higher level of proficiency in Vietnamese compared to French. These results were also confirmed by evidence from their oral memoirs and participant observation. Based on these results one could claim that the majority of respondents in this group were bilinguals with a relatively high level of competence in both Vietnamese and French. There was not a great deal of difference between their levels of competence in Vietnamese and French. In fact, their levels of competence in French, in all four macro skills, were rated slightly above their levels of competence in Vietnamese.

**Chart 6. 7 French Compared to Vietnamese Proficiency – QF Group (N =60)**

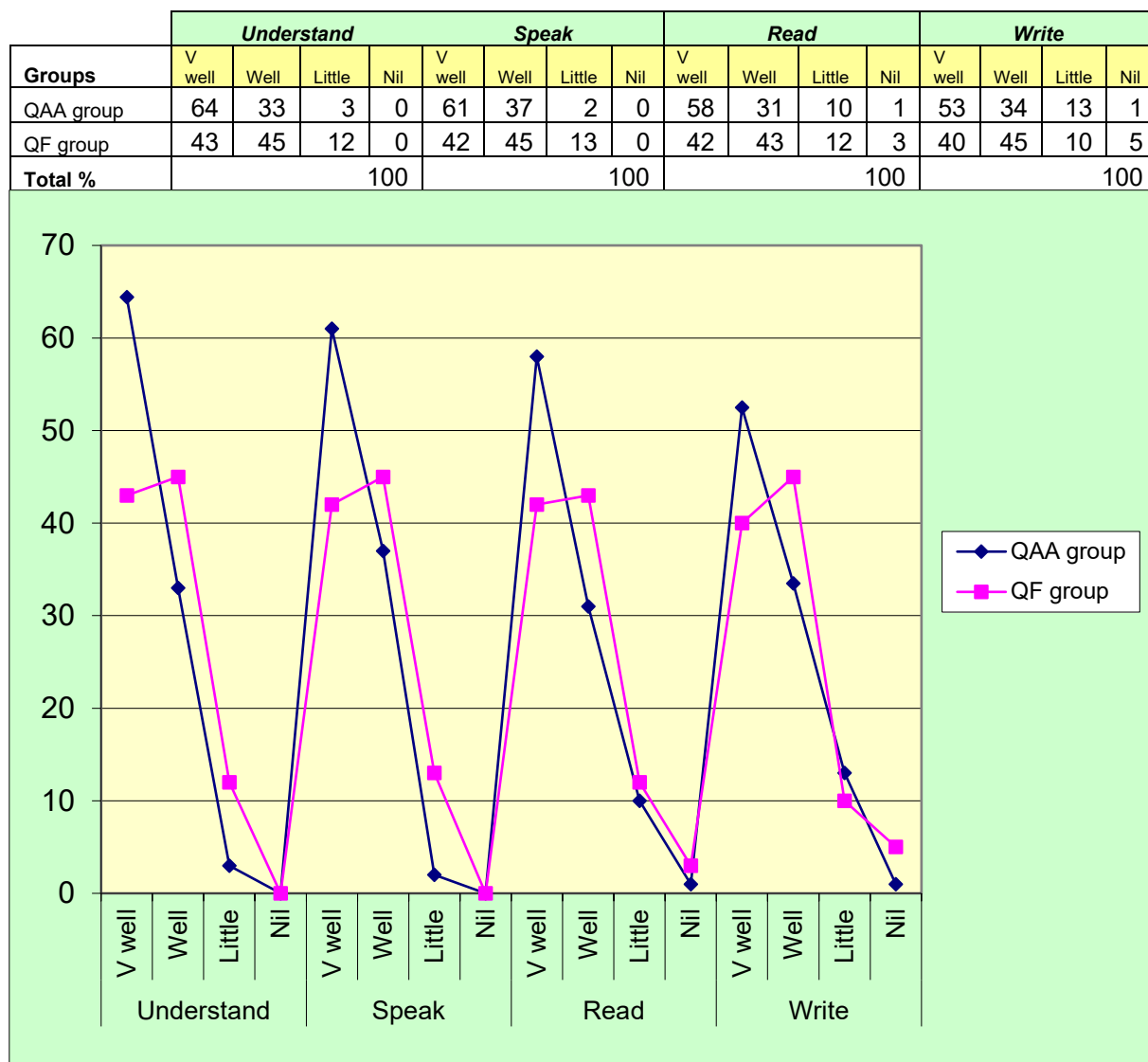
### **Comparing Respondents' Linguistic Competency in Adelaide and Paris**

Vietnamese Proficiency - QAA group compared to QF group. *Chart 6.8* below shows that both groups of respondents were competent in all macro skills of Vietnamese. This was expected, as the majority of respondents in these two groups were adults when they arrived in the host country and Vietnamese was their mother tongue. However, the comparison between these two groups revealed that the overall Vietnamese proficiency level of the QAA group respondents was higher than that of the QF group respondents. In examining each of the four macro skills separately, it shows that the number of those who reported their ability of Understanding and Speaking Vietnamese well or very well was 9% higher, among respondents in the QAA group than those in the QF group. On the other hand, the percentage of those reporting that they could Understand and Speak Vietnamese a little was 10% higher in the QF group than in the QAA group.

With regard to *Reading* and *Writing* skills, a similar pattern emerged within these two groups: the number of those who could *Read* Vietnamese *very well or well* was (2-4%)

higher among respondents in the QAA group compared to those in the QF group. The number of those who could *Read Vietnamese a little* was 2% higher in the QF group than in the QAA group but those who could *Write in Vietnamese a little* was 3% lower in the QF group than in the QAA group. The rate of those who reported that they did not know how to *Read or Write* in Vietnamese was (2-4%) higher in the QF group than in the QAA group.

**Chart 6. 8 Comparison of Vietnamese Proficiency QAA Group & QF Group**



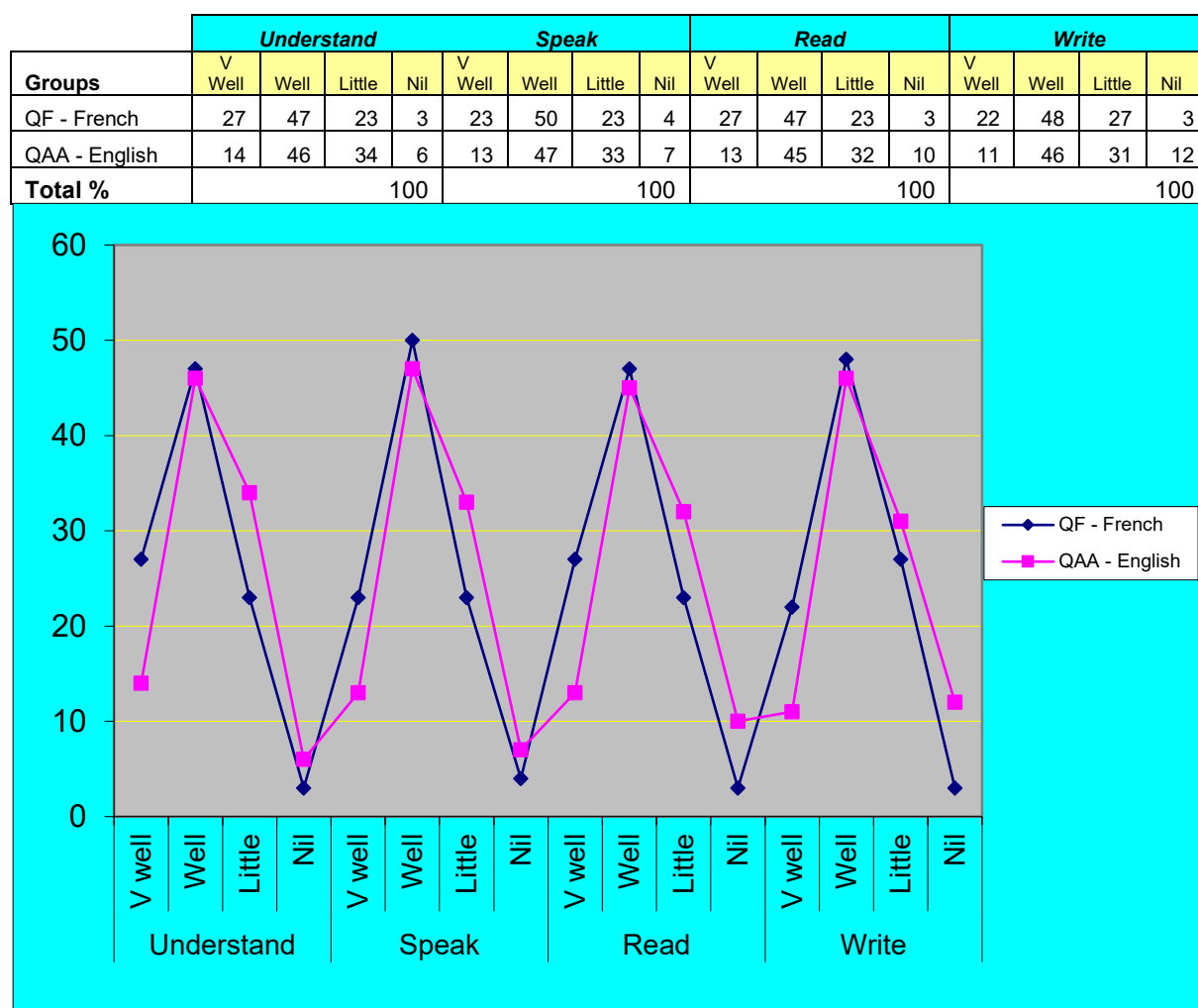
Thus, these results show clearly that the overall proficiency in Vietnamese among the QAA group respondents was significantly higher than those in the QF group. In other words, respondents from Adelaide appeared to be more competent in Vietnamese. This could be interpreted as the Vietnamese language maintenance level seemed to be greater among respondents from Adelaide than those from Paris at the time of this study. This could be attributed to a number of factors such as the period of residence in the host

country, age of the participants on arrival and their attitudes and tendencies towards Vietnamese as well as the opportunities for them to maintain the language in the host country. The influence of these factors on the respondents' language maintenance outcomes are discussed later on in this chapter and the chapter to follow.

### Proficiency in the Host Language (English or French) - QAA group compared to QF group.

*Chart 6.9* below shows that respondents in both QAA and QF groups were relatively competent in the language of the host country: English and French respectively. However, in examining their proficiency in each language separately, it shows that the number of those in Paris who reported that they knew all four French macro skills *very well* was almost double the number of those in Adelaide who reported that their English skills were at this level of proficiency. The percentage of those who rated their competence in the host language as *well* was similar in both groups.

*Chart 6. 9 Comparison of Proficiency in the Host Language - QAA Group & QF Group*



On the other hand, the percentage of those who reported their proficiency in the host language as *a little* was (4-11%) higher in the QAA group than in the QF group. Thus, these results show that the overall proficiency in French among the QF group respondents was higher than the proficiency in English among respondents in the QAA group. In other words, respondents from Paris appeared to be more competent in French than those from Adelaide were in regard to English.

## Factors Influencing Language Proficiency

The results of the respondents' linguistic proficiency described previously could be affected by a number of factors such as age, gender, pre-migration linguistic experience and the sociopolitical situation of the host country. However, it seemed appropriate in this situation, to examine here the following two factors, namely **(i) the period of residence** in the host country and **(ii) age of the respondents on arrival**. Results from the questionnaire concerning these two variables are presented, as the most relevant in explaining the differences between the two groups. *Table 6.5*

*Table 6. 5 Respondents' Average Age and Period of Residence in 2004*

Respondents	Number	Average Age on arrival	Period of Residence in Host Country
QAA group	160	48	17 years
QF group	60	47	22 years

**(i) Period of Residence.** It is generally believed that the longer the period of residence, the more competent in the host language, migrants become. As shown in *Table 6.5* the average length of residence in France of QF group respondents was twenty-two years and that of the QAA group was seventeen years. Thus, as a group, the QF respondents had lived, on average, five years longer in France, than the QAA group respondents had in Australia.

However, Clyne's (1991: 74-79) study on community language maintenance and shift in Australia showed that there was no clear-cut correlation between the period of residence factor and language maintenance and shift. He claimed that period of residence was particularly difficult to assess as a variable because of its inextricable link with other sociopolitical and psychological factors such as people's attitudes towards that particular language and government policies over a given time.

Thus, the Vietnamese community in France, for example, had roots in that country in a way that was not true for immigrants to Australia. Although the majority of members in both communities were refugees who arrived in these countries after the fall of Saigon in 1975, observational data showed more evidence of Francophone characteristics among the general Vietnamese community in France than Anglophone ones among the general Vietnamese community in Australia.

It should also be pointed out that many of the QF group of respondents, especially those who worked for the French colonial government in Vietnam and those who came to France to study in the 1960's and 1970's then remained in France as a result of the fall of Saigon in April 1975, reported in their oral memoirs, that they had already acquired a reasonable level of French proficiency before they settled in France. French had been widely promoted in the Vietnamese education system, as the most important foreign language, more than a century before the introduction of English, in the second half of the twentieth century, as a result of the Americans' involvement in the Vietnam War. All of these elements could have had some positive effect on the overall level of French proficiency of the QF group respondents, as well as a possible negative effect on their maintenance and transmission of Vietnamese.

**(ii) Age of Respondents on Arrival.** Many studies on second language acquisition have shown a definite correlation between the age of the immigrants on arrival and their ability to learn the host language. The younger an immigrant is when he/she arrives, the quicker he/she acquires the language of the host country. Conversely, it is a well attested fact that young immigrants tend to lose their native language faster than the older people who had arrived in the host country with a well-established linguistic system (Clyne 1991). Results revealed in *Table 7. 5* show almost no difference in average age between the two groups of respondents in 2004 (48 in QAA group and 47 in QF group). However, a detailed analysis of concrete profiles of the two groups show that the QF group had a larger number of those who arrived in France before the age of twelve than those in the QAA group (6% in the QAA group and 20% in the QF group). This factor could have contributed positively to the overall French language proficiency, and negatively to Vietnamese language maintenance and transmission among the QF group.



Other factors influencing the maintenance and transmission of Vietnamese language to second generation such as the family and the Vietnamese community are examined in Chapter 7 and Chapter 9, respectively.

## Patterns of Language Usage

In order to take into account the noticeable differences between the two groups in terms of family structure (i.e. the number of single, childless, without siblings or parents in the family), the percentages for language usage among family members presented in the tables and charts which follow, were calculated differently from the earlier tables to exclude those who indicated that the category was inappropriate to them. The active linguistic experience of respondents in the QF group and the QAA group is shown in *Tables 6.6 & 6.7* as well as *Charts 6.10 – 6.18* below.

**Table 6. 6 Comparison of Language Usage among Family Members – QF and QAA Groups**

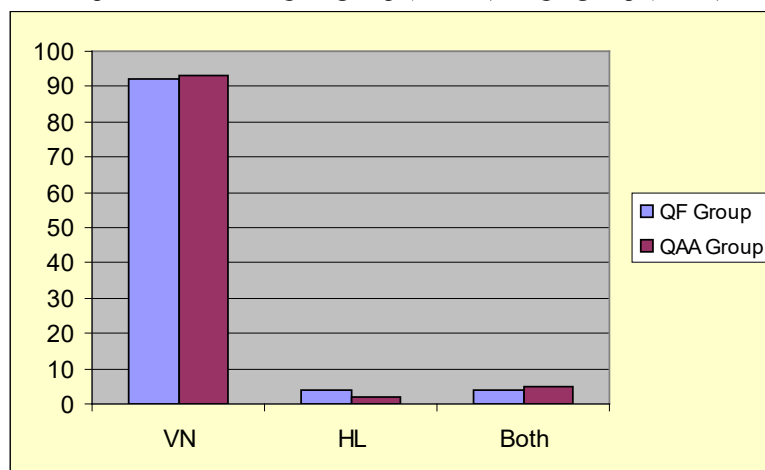
QF Group (N=60)																				
Husband/Wife				Children				Siblings				Mother				Father				
	VN	Fr	Both	Total	VN	Fr	Both	Total	VN	Fr	Both	Total	VN	Fr	Both	Total	VN	Fr	Both	Total
N	24	1	1	26	18	1	5	24	41	3	9	58	42	2	2	46	35	2	2	39
%	92	4	4	100	75	4	21	100	77	6	17	100	92	4	4	100	90	5	5	100
QAA Group (N=160)																				
Husband/Wife				Children				Siblings				Mother				Father				
	VN	EN	Both	Total	VN	EN	Both	Total	VN	EN	Both	Total	VN	EN	Both	Total	VN	EN	Both	Total
N	116	3	6	125	89	8	16	113	127	6	13	146	117	1	0	118	98	1	1	100
%	93	2	5	100	79	7	14	100	87	4	9	100	99	1	0	100	98	1	1	100

**Language Used When Speaking to Spouse.** Results revealed in *Table 6.6* as well as *Charts 6.10* below indicated that the percentage of QF group respondents, who used Vietnamese when speaking to their spouse, was similar to that of the QAA group (92% and 93%, respectively). However, it should be noted that the percentage of respondents with single status in the QF group was more than double that of the QAA group (52% and 24%, respectively – see *Table 4.1 of Chapter 4*). *Table 6.6* above shows very little difference in the proportion of those, who used both Vietnamese and the host language, and those, who used the host language only, to communicate with their spouse in both groups. Memoir and observational evidence confirmed that there was little difference in relation to linguistic usage between husband and wife of the first generation. The Vietnamese language was used almost exclusively in the home among married respondents in Paris and in Adelaide. This represents a very high level of Vietnamese

language maintenance, among respondents of the first generation, regardless of the variation in the period of residence in the host country.

**Chart 6. 10 Language Used When Speaking to Spouse in Percentages**

*Comparison between QAA group (N=160) & QF group (N=60)*

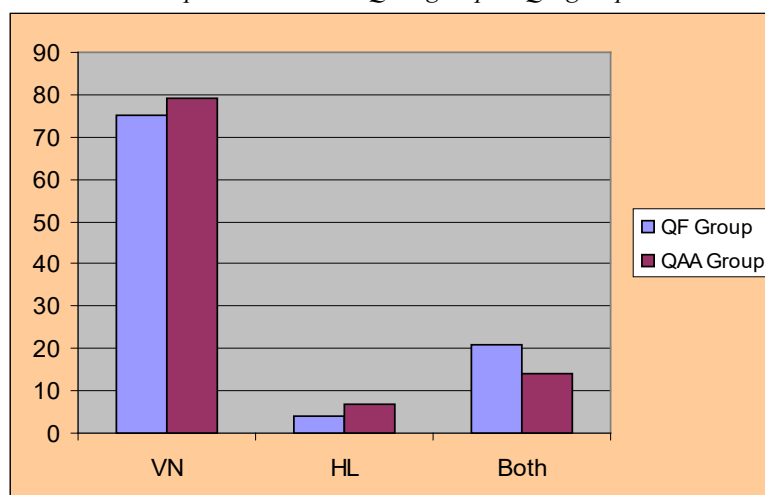


*NB: HL: Host Language; VN: Vietnamese Language*

**Language Used When Speaking to Children.** Table 6.6, page 198 & Chart 6.11 below show that the most important finding, in terms of language maintenance and transmission, was the level of Vietnamese usage among the parents when they spoke to their children. The comparison between the two groups shows that the level of Vietnamese usage among QAA group respondents when talking to their children was higher than that of the QF group (79% and 75%, respectively) but the percentage of those among the QF group, who used both Vietnamese and French to communicate with their children, was 7% higher than those who used both Vietnamese and English among the QAA group.

**Chart 6. 11 Language Used When Speaking to Children in Percentages**

*Comparison between QAA group & QF group*



*NB: HL: Host Language; VN: Vietnamese Language*

It was interesting to note that the percentage of those among the QAA group, who used English only to communicate with their children, was 3% higher than those who used French only among the QF group in Paris (*Table 6.6 & Chart 6.11*).

It should be noted that here, too, the QF group by proportion, had more respondents than the QAA group with single status and no children. In some instances, it was difficult to compare these two groups of respondents, based on statistical evidence, as the number and composition of the two groups were not exactly the same. Hence, it was necessary to complement this statistical evidence with memoir and observational evidence.

Thus, memoir and observational evidence confirmed that parents in Adelaide used Vietnamese when speaking to their children more than those in Paris. Out of twenty-six memoir contributors from Adelaide, who had children, twenty-three (Nos 23, 26, 27, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46, 48, 49, 51, 52, 53) reported that they always used Vietnamese when talking to their children, whether it was in the home or outside the home. Only two (Nos 30 and 47) used both Vietnamese and English as reflected in the following extract from an oral memoir interview with respondent No 30.

*Q: Do your children speak Vietnamese well?*

*R: Not very well. They are able to understand, but unfortunately the school they went to there was no Vietnamese.*

*Q: In what language do you speak to them?*

*R: All the difficult words, I had to use English. The everyday words I speak to them in Vietnamese.*

Thus, twenty-three parents in this memoir group used Vietnamese only and two (9%) used both English and Vietnamese to communicate with their children while in France out of nine parents with children, who were interviewed, five (Nos 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11) stated that they used Vietnamese always when talking to their children at home. The other four (Nos 1, 3, 4, 6) used mainly French to communicate with their children because their children could not speak Vietnamese. This represents nearly half of the parents participating in the oral memoir interviews. In fact, many Vietnamese parents in Paris thought that their children needed to learn how to speak French only, so that they could be successful in the French society, as explained in the following memoir.

*Theo em thì chỉ cần tiếng Pháp thôi chứ không cần tiếng Việt nữa. ..Đối với em tiếng Pháp thì nó phải biết bởi vì nếu sống trên nước Pháp mà không biết tiếng Pháp thì rất dễ bị người ta đè ép nó. Thứ nhì là vấn đề học vấn bắt buộc phải biết tiếng Pháp thì nó mới có thể leo lên đến hết cái chương trình học vấn của nó. (O.Memoir 1, female, born 1963, arrived in France 1984)*

*In my opinion they (my children) only need French, they don't need to know Vietnamese. They must know French well because living in France, if they don't know French, they will be subjected to all kinds of discriminations and disadvantages. Secondly, they must know French so that they can be successful in their academic pursuit). (O.Memoir 1, female, born 1963, arrived in France 1984)*

Observational evidence showed that this young mother did not speak French well but she used French to speak to her children at home because none of the children knew how to speak Vietnamese. She also stated in her memoir that she feared that by teaching her children Vietnamese she might create linguistic confusion in her children's minds and, as a result, reduce the chance for her children to learn French well.

Similar thinking was expressed in oral memoir No 6, a father of two young children, who came to France as a mature age student in 1973. This respondent reported that he initially only intended to stay in France for a few years and then to return to Vietnam to continue his career as a secondary teacher. Unfortunately, the change of government in Vietnam in 1975, made it impossible for him to realise his plan. By default, he had to adopt France as his new country. He and his wife then decided that they should only use French in the home, so that their children could learn French quicker and consequently, be able to succeed in French society. Vietnamese was not considered important in their thinking at the time, as expressed in the following extract of his memoir.

*Vâng, thực ra quyết định đó (quyết định chỉ nói tiếng Pháp với con) là quyết định của chúng tôi vì chúng tôi nghĩ rằng ở xã hội Pháp hay bất cứ xã hội nào thì cũng nên hội nhập vào xã hội đó mà để hội nhập được thì cái vấn đề ngôn ngữ là quan trọng, quan trọng vô cùng. Nếu mà mình không nói được tiếng Tây hay là không nói thạo thì là một trở ngại lớn. Từ đó chúng tôi có ý muốn là phải hội nhập vào xã hội Pháp và tạo cho con cái một cơ hội tốt.*

*Yes, indeed the decision to speak French only with our children was our deliberate decision because we thought that when you live in French society or in any society for that matter, you should integrate fully into that society and language is the most important element for integration. When we realised that, it would be a huge disadvantage for us to live in France, without a good knowledge of French we decided to integrate ourselves into the French society so that we could create a good opportunity for our children's future.)*

*(O. Memoir 6, male, born 1943, arrived in France 1973)*

In France, and to a lesser degree in Australia in the 1970's, many Vietnamese parents had a fear of the negative effect of Vietnamese learning on the acquisition process of Vietnamese children learning the host language, whether French or English. They wanted their children to learn the language of the host country well in order to succeed in their academic studies, as reflected in the above memoir extracts (Nos 1, 4, 6). The long-term results of these decisions were described in the following extract from an ex-soldier of the French army who migrated to France with his family in 1972.

*Khí mới di dân sang đây thì hình như người nào cũng tính sai. Tính sai là muốn con mình nó học giỏi tiếng Pháp vì tiếng Việt nó biết rồi. Thành ra nó học ở trường đã nói tiếng Pháp rồi, về nhà bố, mẹ lại cũng nói tiếng Pháp nên đa số bây giờ quên tiếng Việt luôn. Nhưng mà bây giờ thì họ đã ý thức được là cái tiếng Pháp không cần học nó cũng có thể nói được. Nhưng mà muốn giữ được cái tiếng Việt thì về nhà, ít nhất phải có người nói với chúng nó một ngày đôi ba câu thì chúng nó mới nhớ được.*

*(It appears that when we first migrated here everyone thought wrongly. We wanted our children to learn French well thinking that they had already known Vietnamese so there would be no need to worry about it. In school they had learned and spoken French all the time and when they came home, parents also spoke to them in French. Consequently, the majority of our children now have lost the ability to speak Vietnamese. Now parents have realised that French is very easy for their children to learn but in order to maintain Vietnamese, parents must at least speak some Vietnamese to their children at home so that they can remember it). (O. Memoir 3, male, born 1917, arrived in France 1972)*

When talking about Vietnamese parents, this respondent was actually reflecting on his own experience as a parent raising his own children in France. His memoir revealed that he had three children: one boy and two girls. When they arrived in France, his children were young but as parents they did not make any effort for their children to learn or to speak Vietnamese even at home. All three of his children succeeded well in their academic studies and became professionals in France but lost almost all their Vietnamese language skills. They all married other Vietnamese at the same professional level and had children of their own who were then graduated from universities but these young Vietnamese of the third generation knew very little about the Vietnamese language and culture. For this particular extended family with three generations living in France, the Vietnamese language was only used among members of the first generation (grandparents and relatives of the same generation). Second and third generation members spoke only French. They still treasured Vietnamese family values and formed close family ties with each other. They often gathered together at the grandparents' place to celebrate family events with Vietnamese traditional food on the

Vietnamese New Year or anniversaries of the deceased members of the families but at these gatherings French was mainly the language of communication. So for this family and many others in a similar situation, the prospect of maintaining and transmitting Vietnamese language and culture to future generations was not very promising.

This situation has not happened in Australia yet, according to the memoir and observation data. So far, Vietnamese has been the only language used in family and community gatherings although among the second generation, English is more often used than Vietnamese. However, when the second generation communicates with the first generation, their Vietnamese linguistic system is activated. Evidence shows that all Vietnamese-Australian parents who participated in the oral memoir interviews were totally committed to the ideology of transmitting Vietnamese linguistic and cultural values to their children. These results may be attributed to the concerted efforts from community leaders and educators who were determined to promote the benefits of children learning Vietnamese, through the Vietnamese press, radio programs, community events, especially the establishment of Vietnamese ethnic schools in all states of Australia in the 1980's (Chapter 5). The acceptance of Vietnamese as a university entrance subject with bonus points in some Australian universities in the mid 1980's also helped to reinforce the thinking of Vietnamese parents with regard to Vietnamese. As previously mentioned, almost all Vietnamese-Australian parents, at the time of interview, wanted to make sure that their children spoke Vietnamese only at home and to learn Vietnamese through an ethnic school as soon as they started going to school, as reflected in the following extract of memoir from a young mother:

*Em cố gắng luôn luôn nói tiếng Việt với các cháu. Gia đình em luôn nói tiếng Việt trong gia đình giữa cha mẹ và con cái. Tất cả ba cháu đều nói tiếng Việt khá. Em cho hai cháu lớn đi học tiếng Việt ngay khi còn nhỏ và hai đứa đã học tiếng Việt cho tới lớp chín, lớp mười mới nghỉ. Em cho các cháu đi học tiếng Việt mỗi sáng thứ bảy và học cả trong trường St Thomas More nữa. Cháu nhỏ nhất nói tiếng Việt rất rành. Nó mới năm tuổi nhưng đã bắt đầu đi học trường tiếng Việt mỗi sáng thứ bảy.*

*I try my hardest to communicate in Vietnamese with my children. We only speak Vietnamese at home. All three of my children speak Vietnamese quite well. The two older boys started to learn Vietnamese at Reception and continued to study it through the ethnic school every Saturday morning and at St Thomas More College until they reached year nine and ten. My youngest son is only five years old but already started going to the Vietnamese school every Saturday morning. He speaks Vietnamese very well for his age).*

**(O. Memoir 39, female, born 1965, arrived in Australia 1984)**

Oral memoir respondent No 35 was another example of the way parents were committed to promoting Vietnamese speaking and learning for their children at a very early age.

- Q: *Hai đứa nói tiếng Việt giỏi không? (Do your two children speak Vietnamese well?)*
- R: *Tiếng Việt hai cháu giỏi. Ở nhà nói tiếng Việt không à sợ. (Their Vietnamese is good. At home they speak Vietnamese only).*
- Q: *Em có cho mấy cháu đi học trường tiếng Việt thứ bảy? (Did you send your children to Vietnamese school on Saturdays?)*
- R: *Có. Tiếng Việt của cháu giỏi lắm. Thằng con trai năm nào cũng được phần thưởng hết. (Yes. They all have been studying Vietnamese very well. My son has received a prize for Vietnamese every year).*
- (O. Memoir 35, female, born 1965, arrived in Australia 1985)*

This pattern of Vietnamese learning and usage was very common in Australia at the time of this research but was not evident in the oral memoirs from parents of the same age group and with a similar period of residence in France. Among the Vietnamese-French parents interviewed, only five (Nos 7, 8, 9, 10, 11) stated that they had made a conscious decision to speak to their children in Vietnamese in the home and in the Vietnamese church environment.

*Như đã nói với sơ là con thì con áp dụng cái chính sách là nói tiếng Việt ở trong gia đình giữa cha mẹ, con cái và anh chị em với nhau. Đối với con thì con không có nói tiếng Pháp với nó. Tiếng Pháp là cái tiếng nó học ở học đường. Nó bắt buộc phải nói tiếng Pháp để sinh tồn và giao dịch với những người Pháp. Một đứa nhỏ mà khi nó nhắc điện thoại lên nó biết trả lời bằng tiếng Việt hoặc tiếng Pháp thì đó là cái may cho những gia đình Việt nam. Còn cái mà chỉ biết nói tiếng Pháp không và quên hẳn cái ngôn ngữ gốc gia vàng của nó thì đó là một khiếm khuyết rất lớn lao... Chả có gì đáng hãnh diện nếu một người Việt giỏi tiếng Pháp mà không biết tiếng Việt và ngược lại giỏi tiếng Việt mà không biết tiếng Pháp thì cũng chả có gì mà đáng hãnh diện cả.*

*I have applied a strategy of always speaking Vietnamese in the home between parents and children and also with my own brothers and sister. I have never used French to communicate with my children at home. French is the language that they learn at school and they have to learn how to speak French well so that they can survive in France and to be able to communicate with French people. It is a blessing for a Vietnamese family where children are able to pick up a telephone to answer the caller appropriately either in Vietnamese or in French. It is very unfortunate for a Vietnamese family to bring up their children only speaking French. There is nothing to be proud of if a Vietnamese person knows French well but does not know any Vietnamese and vice versa.*

*(O. Memoir 7, male, born 1949, arrived in France 1979)*

It appeared that this respondent strongly believed in the value of educating his children to become bilingual, but most importantly, for them not to forget the language and culture of their origin. Both the husband and wife were interviewed and the accounts of their oral memoirs show that both the husband and wife had put a lot of effort into raising their children bilingually. They sent their children to the Vietnamese school organised by the Vietnamese Catholic community in Paris and always talked to them in Vietnamese. Both children sang in the Vietnamese church choir. This respondent was one of the teachers of the Vietnamese Catholic Community School. He also helped in running religious instruction programs for children and adults who wanted to become Catholics. It was interesting to note that further in the interview he stated that his daughter had enrolled herself in two different religious instruction programs - one through the Vietnamese Catholic community and one through a French parish nearby - to prepare herself for her First Communion.

Despite all the parents' efforts, success seemed to be limited to only this family. Observation showed that both children (aged 12 and 10 at the time of interview) could understand Vietnamese but were not able to maintain a simple conversation in Vietnamese with the researcher. This might be due to the fact that they had met the researcher for the first time. It was noted that their parents talked to them in Vietnamese but they responded mainly in French and with each other they used French only. These children had a passive knowledge of Vietnamese. They understood Vietnamese well but it was difficult for them to activate their Vietnamese linguistic system even in the home domain where they felt perfectly safe and encouraged by their parents to use Vietnamese all the time. In this instance, one could not blame the parents for lacking commitment or consistency in using Vietnamese with their children because the father stated twice in his memoir that he never used French when speaking to his children but he did not mind if his children responded back to him in French.

*Mỗi ngày chúng tôi thường đều nói tiếng Việt trong gia đình. Thứ nhất là để cho chúng nó quen nghe giọng tiếng Việt. Thứ hai nữa là không bao giờ tôi nói tiếng Pháp với chúng nó. Nhiều khi nói tiếng Việt nó trả lời bằng tiếng Việt hoặc nó trả lời bằng tiếng Pháp. Nhưng mà cái đó không phải là vấn đề. Nghĩa là miễn sao tui nó hiểu được những gì mình nói với chúng nó. Khi mà tui nó quen được rồi thì tui nó không sợ gì mà nói ra. Hai đứa nhỏ nhà tôi nhiều khi tui nó nghe được một câu tiếng Việt thì tui nó có thể dịch qua tiếng Pháp ngay.*



*Every day we speak Vietnamese in our family. We do so firstly, for our children to have the opportunity to listen to Vietnamese tones. Secondly, I have never spoken to my children in French. Sometimes when I talked to them in Vietnamese, they answered me either in Vietnamese or in French and it is OK. The main thing is for them to understand what I wanted to communicate with them in Vietnamese. When they become familiar and more confident with Vietnamese they will use it. Both of our children, when they hear a Vietnamese sentence they can translate it into French immediately.*

*(O. Memoir 7, male, born 1949, arrived in France 1979)*

In contrast to the view of those who believed in a total assimilation into French culture such as oral memoir respondents (Nos 1, 4, 6), respondent No 10 stated in his oral memoir that he had totally rejected French culture and refused to integrate into French society, because he claimed that French ways of life had contributed to the downfall of his children's morality. He had unsuccessfully tried to raise his children in the Vietnamese way by encouraging them to speak Vietnamese, eat Vietnamese food, wear Vietnamese traditional dress and behave in the Vietnamese way while living in France. He also reported that he was planning to go back to Vietnam to live, because he felt so unhappy living in France. This respondent and his family came to France directly from Vietnam in 1984 because his wife was born of a French father and a Vietnamese mother. They had five children aged from seventeen to two at the time of interview. When asked about linguistic usage in his family he stated categorically that Vietnamese had always been the only language permitted in the home, although some of his children did not speak Vietnamese well:

*Q: Các cháu có nói được tiếng Việt không?*

*(Can your children speak Vietnamese?)*

*A: Máy đứa nhỏ thì khá còn hai thằng lớn nói tiếng Tây hoài thôi.*

*(The younger children speak Vietnamese better but the two oldest boys speak French all the time.)*

*Q: Thế sao? Còn đối với bố mẹ thì nó nói tiếng gì?*

*Really? (So what language do they use to communicate with you?)*

*A: Thì đương nhiên là nó phải nói tiếng Việt rồi.*

*(Of course, they have to speak Vietnamese.)*

*Q: Vậy còn hai cháu lớn thì sao?*

*(How about your two oldest sons?)*

*A: Thì cũng nói tiếng Việt Nam. Thứ nhất là bố mẹ không thích và thứ hai là cũng không rành tiếng Tây và nếu có rành thì cũng không nói. Bởi vì người Việt Nam thì phải nói tiếng Việt Nam. Nếu người Việt Nam mà không nói rành tiếng Tây thì cũng không đáng kể. Nghĩa là nói được thì tốt còn nếu không nói được thì cũng không đáng kể. Tôi nghĩ rằng người Việt Nam mà không nói được tiếng Việt Nam thì mới đáng chú ý.*

*Đó là điều nhục nhã cho nên tôi cũng thường nói với con cái tôi như thế và tôi cũng hướng dẫn cho ba đứa nhỏ sau này hiểu điều đó.*

*They also must speak Vietnamese with us. Firstly, we (parents) do not want them to speak to us in French. Secondly, we don't speak French well and if we do, we still don't want to speak to them in French. Being a Vietnamese, one must know how to speak Vietnamese. In my opinion, if a Vietnamese does not speak French well, it doesn't matter but if he/she does not know how to speak Vietnamese it should be considered a shame. I always tell my children that, especially the three younger ones. I have guided our three youngest children to become fully aware of the importance of Vietnamese.*

*(O. Memoir 10, male, born 1936, arrived in France 1984)*

Memoir respondent No 11 was another parent who was committed to raising her two daughters to become not only balanced bilinguals but also proper Vietnamese women:

*Ở nhà hai cháu phải hoàn toàn nói tiếng Việt với cha mẹ. Cả hai đứa đều nói tiếng Việt khá nhưng viết thì còn lỗi nhiều vì cả hai cháu đều học tiếng Việt nhiều năm và thi tú tài môn tiếng Việt tại đây. Ở nhà hai cháu không những phải nói tiếng Việt mà còn phải sống hoàn toàn là người con gái Việt nam.*

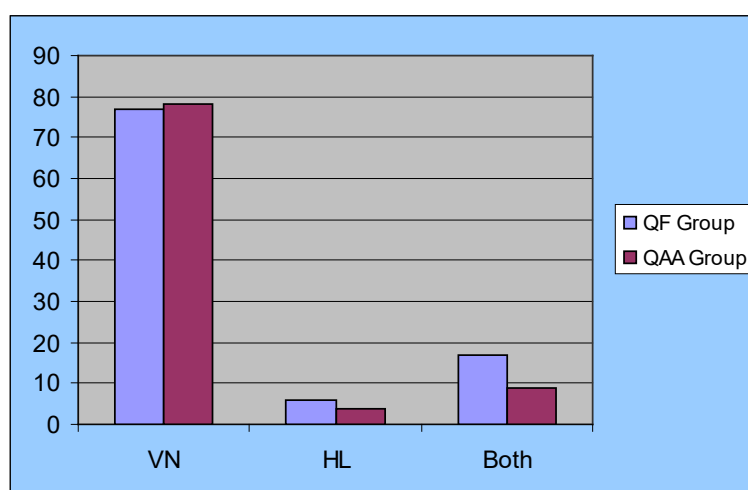
*(At home both of my children speak Vietnamese only with parents. Both speak Vietnamese quite well but their Vietnamese writing still has lots of mistakes. Both studied Vietnamese for many years and sat for the public examination of Vietnamese at baccalaureate level here. At home my two girls not only have to speak Vietnamese exclusively, but also have to behave like proper Vietnamese young women.) (O. Memoir 11, female, born 1948, arrived in France 1966)*

This respondent's daughters were some of the rare students who studied Vietnamese up to the last year of high school and one of them continued her study of Vietnamese at university level hoping that she could use it later on in her professional career as a teacher in France. Memoir respondent No 11 was one of those students who came to study in France in the late nineteen sixties but was not able to return because of the political situation in Vietnam. She and her husband (also a student at that time) like many other Vietnamese students were granted refugee status by the French government and allowed to stay on in France. Almost all of these students were from rich families and many were sons and daughters of high ranking officers in the South Vietnam army. Therefore, they were actively involved in the movement against communism during the Vietnam War and they were usually strong in their commitment to promote Vietnamese culture in France. They formed a distinctive class of well-educated highly cultured Vietnamese professionals in France. Respondent No 11's view, with regard to Vietnamese language and culture, seems to represent the predominant view of this particular group of Vietnamese-French. Her view also reflects well the observation made by Le Xuan Khoa (1985) that educated Vietnamese parents in France were more

concerned for their children to maintain their Vietnamese language and culture than those who were less educated and who arrived in France as refugees after 1975.

***Language Used When Speaking to Siblings.*** The second element which proved useful in determining the degree of language maintenance within the French and Australian groups was the level of active use of Vietnamese when these respondents communicated with their siblings. Statistics from *Table 6.6*, page 198 and *Chart 6.12* show clearly that respondents in Australia reported that they used Vietnamese 10% more than those in France when talking to their siblings. The rate of those using French only when talking to their siblings was 2% higher than those using English only. The percentage of those using both Vietnamese and French was 8% greater than those using both English and Vietnamese.

***Chart 6. 12 Language Used When Speaking to Siblings in Percentage***  
*Comparison between QAA group & QF group*



*NB: HL: Host Language; VN: Vietnamese Language*

This could mean two things: either there were more bilingual speakers among the QF group compared to the QAA group or more respondents in the QF group had lost the ability to speak Vietnamese so they had to speak French with their siblings. The latter seems to be more likely the case because evidence discussed earlier showed that the Vietnamese proficiency among respondents in the QF group was relatively low compared to that of the QAA group. This could also be explained by the fact that many respondents in the QAA group, who were equally competent bilinguals (English and Vietnamese), had for ideological or personal reasons made a conscious choice to use Vietnamese instead of English. The Vietnamese language has been regarded more

favourably, by the wider community in Australia than in France. Therefore, Vietnamese people in Australia could feel more confident in using their language in public and among themselves than those in France. It was also noted that in 2004 the QF group by proportion had 12% more respondents in the 20-29 age group than the QAA group. People of this age group would have arrived in France when they were quite young; so they would have had time and ability to master French well, but also been exposed to the tendency to lose their mother tongue at a faster rate than those who had migrated at an older age. Observational evidence indicated that respondents from this age group had the tendency to use the host language as the main language among themselves outside the home at almost the same level in both countries. However, within the home or in the extended family context, those in Australia used Vietnamese more regularly than those in France.

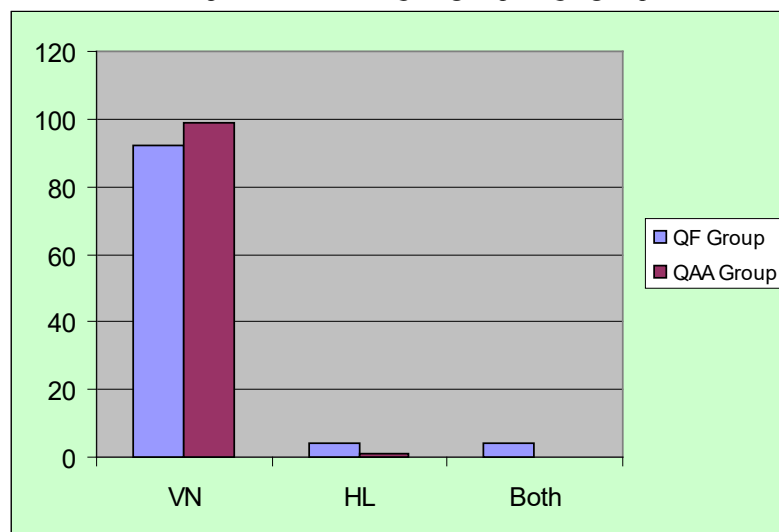
Oral memoirs and observational evidence confirmed that second generation Vietnamese in Paris used French almost exclusively in all domains of communication. Two respondents of second generation and two of 1.5 generation in the QF group could not speak any Vietnamese. This represented 100% of respondents of this category in the QF group. All parents who participated in oral memoir interviews reported that their children, especially those born in France, spoke to their siblings in French all the time (O. Memoirs Nos 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11).

With regard to patterns of language use among second generation Vietnamese-Australians, results from questionnaires and evidence from memoirs point to a similar direction. English was the main language of communication among siblings, and Vietnamese was used sometimes with older siblings in the family context (see Chapter 7 for more details). However, those in Adelaide used mainly Vietnamese when they communicated with other members of the extended family and Vietnamese friends of first generation, while those in Paris used mainly French. This could be attributed to the fact that second generation Vietnamese-Australians had a better opportunity to learn Vietnamese in Australia than second generation Vietnamese-French had in France. Therefore, they possessed a higher level of Vietnamese proficiency and felt more confident in using Vietnamese than those in France.

**Language Used When Speaking to Mother and Father.** Results from *Table 6.6 on* page 198 and *Charts 6.13 & 6.14* below show that almost all respondents in the QAA group, who had parents living in the host country at the time, used Vietnamese exclusively when they talked to their father or mother. However, the level of Vietnamese usage in this instance, among the QF group with their mother and father, was also very high (over 90%). Respondents in both groups used Vietnamese with their mother more than with their father.

**Chart 6. 13 Language Used When Speaking to Mother in Percentages**

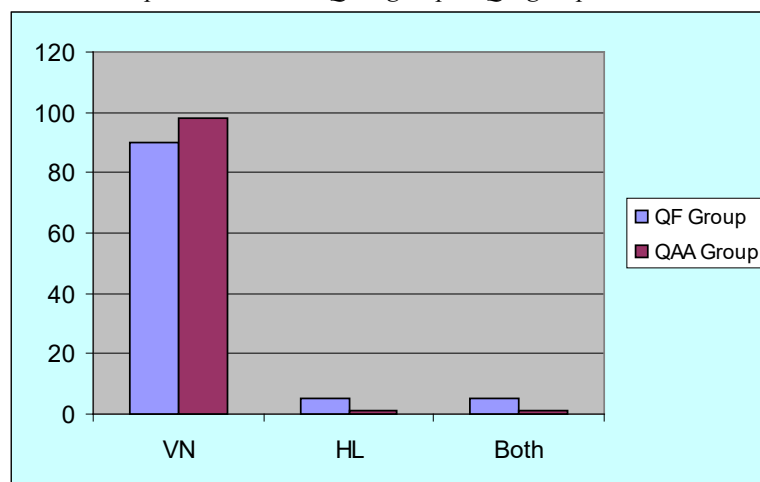
*Comparison between QAA group & QF group*



*NB: HL: Host Language; VN: Vietnamese Language*

**Chart 6. 14 Language Used When Speaking to Father in Percentages**

*Comparison between QAA group & QF group*



*NB: HL: Host Language; VN: Vietnamese Language*

This could be explained by the fact that there were more women than men who could

not speak the language of the host country so their children had no choice but to use Vietnamese to communicate with them. The proportion of those who used the host language only and those who used both Vietnamese and English to communicate with their mother and father was relatively small in both groups of respondents.

This was not unexpected as the majority of respondents in both groups were first generation immigrants in the host country. This is another indicator showing that language maintenance within the family domain, among first generation Vietnamese, still remained strong both in Paris and in Adelaide.

**Language Used When Speaking to Grandparents.** Results revealed in *Table 6.7* and *Chart 6.15* below show that all QAA group respondents, who had grandparents in Adelaide, used Vietnamese only to communicate with their grandparents whereas

**Table 6. 7 Language Used When Speaking to Grandparents, Relatives and Friends**

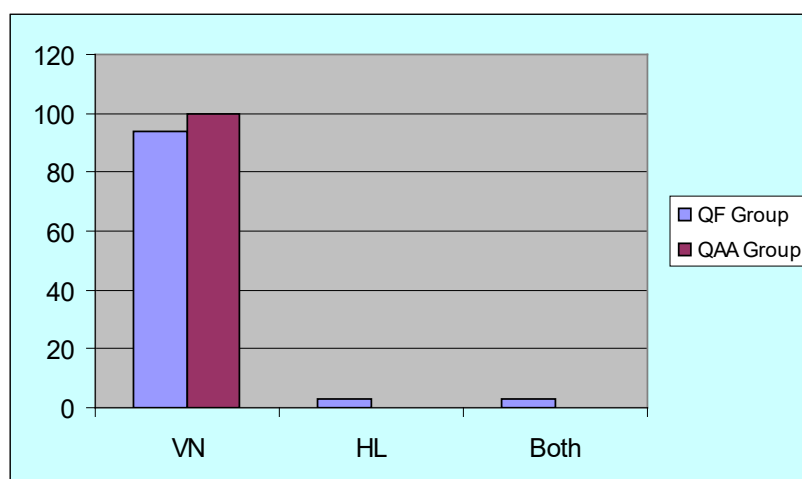
QF Group (N=60)												
	Grandparents				Relatives				Viet Friends			
	VN	Fr	Both	Total	VN	Fr	Both	Total	VN	Fr	Both	Total
N	28	1	1	30	41	3	4	48	41	7	12	60
%	94	3	3	100	86	6	8	100	68	12	20	100

QAA Group (N=160)												
	Grandparents				Relatives				Viet Friends			
	VN	EN	Both	Total	VN	EN	Both	Total	VN	EN	Both	Total
N	67	0	0	67	137	2	6	145	141	4	15	160
%	100	0	0	100	95	1	4	100	88	3	9	100

**Chart 6. 15 Language Used When Speaking to Grandparents in Percentages**

*Comparison between QAA group & QF group*



NB: HL: Host Language; VN: Vietnamese Language

one respondent of the QF group used French only and one used both French and Vietnamese to speak to their grandparents. It is likely that both of them belonged to second generation Vietnamese in France. It should be noted that half of the QF respondents did not have grandparents in France at the time and even a higher percentage (58%) of QAA respondents did not have grandparents in Australia at the time. These respondents reported their response as not applicable (N/A).

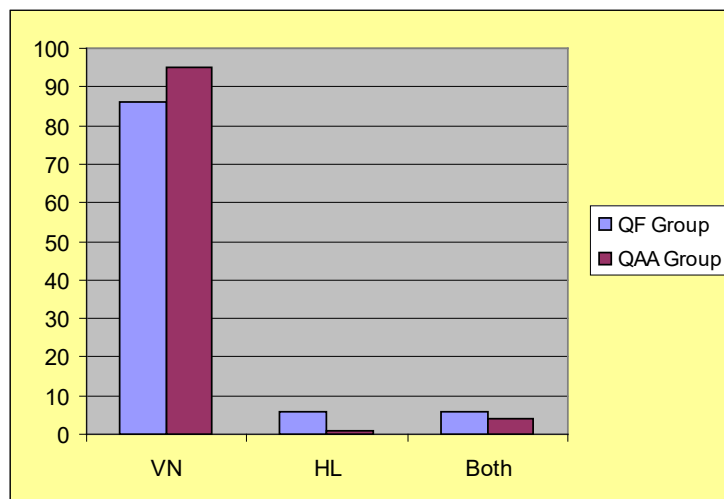
Memoir and observation evidence revealed that a greater number of second generation persons in Adelaide used Vietnamese to speak to their grandparents than those in Paris. Two oral memoir respondents (Nos 12 and 13) from Paris stated that they used French to talk to their grandparents. One of them (No 12) was born in France and the other (No 13) came to France at a very young age. All memoir respondents of second generation with grandparents living in Australia (O. Memoirs Nos 14, 16, 17, 18, 22) and (W. Memoirs Nos 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11) reported that they used Vietnamese only to communicate with their grandparents.

It should be noted that the proportion of elderly Vietnamese in France who could speak French was higher than those elderly in Australia who could speak English for reasons related to the French occupation of Vietnam discussed earlier. Clyne (1991: 113) claimed that grandparents played a vital role in the maintenance of community languages through the social communication within the extended family network. Other studies (Smolicz and Harris 1976; Kipp 1980) also demonstrated that young people used minority languages only or mainly to speak to older people and to a certain degree that had helped to maintain those minority languages.

***Language Used When Speaking to Relatives in the Host Country (Australia or France).*** Table 6.7 above and Chart 6.16 below show that the rate of those among the QAA group, who used Vietnamese only to communicate with their relatives in Australia was 9% higher than those among the QF group, who used Vietnamese only with their relatives in France. Table 6.7 and Chart 6.16 below also shows that the percentage of those, who used both Vietnamese and French to communicate with relatives, was double those who used both Vietnamese and English and the rate of those who used the host language only when speaking to their relatives was 5% more among the QF group compared with the QAA group. These figures demonstrated that the Vietnamese

linguistic system was more often activated among relatives of Vietnamese background in Australia than those in France.

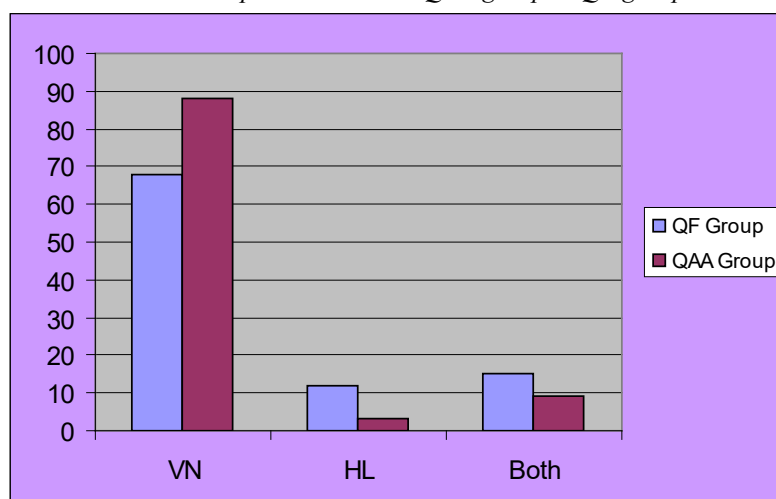
**Chart 6. 16 Language Used When Speaking to Relatives in the Host Country in Percentages**  
Comparison between QAA group & QF group



NB: HL: Host Language; VN: Vietnamese Language

**Language Used When Communicating with Friends in the Host Country (Australia or France)** Table 6.7 above and Chart 6.17 below show that the rate of those among the QAA group, who used Vietnamese only to communicate with their Vietnamese friends in Australia was 20% higher than those among the QF group, who used Vietnamese only with their friends in France.

**Chart 6. 17 Language Used When Speaking to Friends in the Host Country in Percentages**  
Comparison between QAA group & QF group



NB: HL: Host Language; VN: Vietnamese Language

Table 6.7 and Chart 6.17 also show that the proportion of those, who used both Vietnamese and French to communicate with friends, was more than double the rate of those who used both Vietnamese and English to communicate with their friends in



Australia. The rate of those who used the host language only when speaking to their Vietnamese friends was 9% higher among the QF group compared with the QAA group. These figures indicated that the Vietnamese linguistic system was more often activated among friends of Vietnamese background in Adelaide than those in Paris.

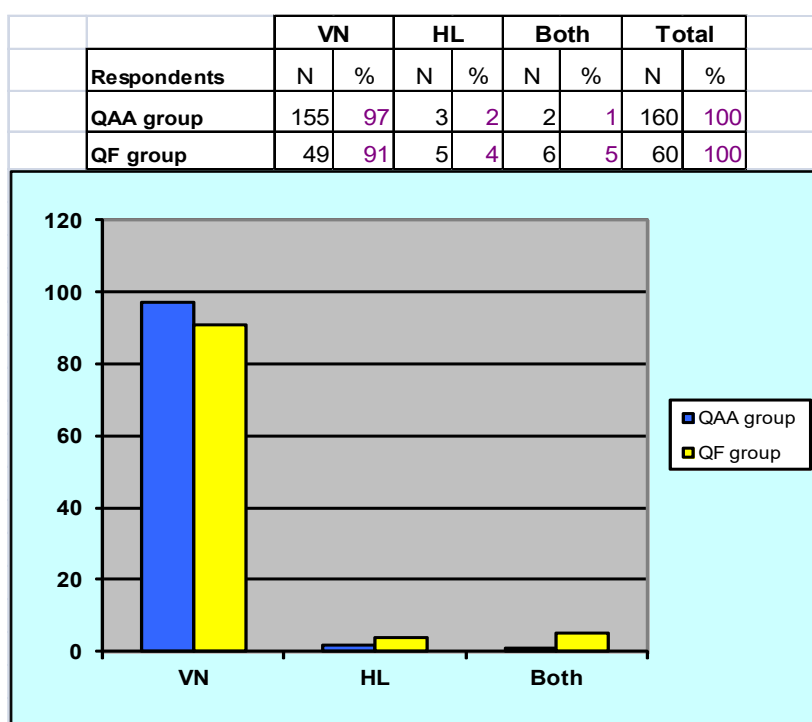
Thus, it appeared that, at that particular point in time, Vietnamese was better maintained with other Vietnamese people beyond the immediate family circle, in Adelaide than in Paris. However, it should be remembered that the Vietnamese community in France was established much earlier than that in Australia. For this reason, it could be expected that Vietnamese language and culture would be more alive in the Vietnamese community in Australia than in France.

***Language Used When Communicating with Relatives or Friends in Vietnam.***

Chart 6.18 below shows that respondents in both QAA and QF groups used mainly Vietnamese to communicate with relatives or friends in Vietnam.

**Chart 6. 18 Language Used When Communicating with Relatives or Friends in Vietnam in**

***Percentage. Comparison between QAA group & QF group***



*NB: HL: Host Language; VN: Vietnamese Language*

However, the percentage of those, who reported to use Vietnamese only to write or telephone their relatives or friends in Vietnam, was 6% higher in the QAA group than in the QF group. Although the proportion of those using both Vietnamese and the host

language or the host language only to write or telephone their relatives or friends in Vietnam was relatively small in both groups (2-5%), the QF group respondents had the tendency to use French only or both Vietnamese and French to communicate with relatives or friends in Vietnam more than the QAA group respondents used English only or both Vietnamese and English to communicate with their relatives or friends in Vietnam. This finding again indicated that the Vietnamese linguistic system was more frequently used among the QAA group respondents than among the QF group respondents in the same domain with the same category of interlocutors.

It should be taken into consideration that six respondents of the QF group replied to this question 'not applicable' (N/A) because they did not have any relatives or friends in Vietnam. The overall result of this question revealed a slightly higher degree of Vietnamese usage outside the home among respondents in Adelaide compared to those in Paris. However, if we take into consideration, the fact that many of QF group respondents had lived in France for a very long period of time, their level of maintenance was remarkable. Participant observation and memoir evidence also confirmed this finding. All QF group respondents of first generation had maintained the ability to activate their Vietnamese linguistic system effectively when there was a need for them to do so, and in this instance, to communicate with their relatives or friends in Vietnam, the majority of whom spoke Vietnamese only.

With regard to second generation, the difference between respondents from Paris and those from Adelaide, in relation to this question, was more obvious. Eighty one percent of second-generation respondents from Adelaide reported that they used Vietnamese to write or telephone their relatives in Vietnam, while only 36% of second generation included in the QF group in Paris did so. The proportion of second-generation respondents, who reported using French only to communicate with relatives or friends in Vietnam, was 7% greater than those who used English only. Similarly, the number of those, who reported to have used both French and Vietnamese to communicate with relatives or friends in Vietnam, was 15% higher than those who used both English and Vietnamese. These results could be seen as indicative of a higher level of Vietnamese language maintenance among second-generation respondents from Adelaide than those from Paris in regard to communication with family members and friends in Vietnam.

## Attitudes towards Vietnamese Language

Attitudes towards a particular language are difficult to measure and quantify. They are often expressed in the most subtle and least obvious ways. In this research, respondents' attitudes and feelings towards the Vietnamese language were assessed through the accounts of their memoirs, as well as their replies in the main questionnaire to a number of specific questions which aimed to seek their opinions and thinking on issues related to Vietnamese language maintenance and transmission. The results of these specific questions are discussed below.

***Attitudes towards Language Maintenance.*** Self-reported replies to Question 3.6, asking respondents to indicate their intention by responding *Yes* or *No* to the question 'Do you want to maintain Vietnamese?' show that all respondents from both QAA and QF groups expressed a very strong desire to maintain Vietnamese as shown in *Table 6. 8*.

***Table 6. 8 Attitudes towards Vietnamese Language Maintenance***  
*Comparison between QAA group & QF group*

	Q 3.6: Do you want to maintain Vietnamese?					
	Yes		No		Total	
<b>Respondents</b>	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>QAA group</b>	160	100	0	0	160	100
<b>QF group</b>	60	100	0	0	60	100

This overwhelming positive attitude towards Vietnamese language maintenance was also confirmed by evidence from oral memoirs and informal conversations with the respondents in different social settings. All memoir contributors from Paris and from Adelaide have uniformly expressed their strong desire and intention to maintain Vietnamese while living in the host country. This positive attitude was revealed across all categories and generations of respondents.

***Attitudes towards Language Transmission.*** All respondents in the QAA and QF groups were asked to respond to a total of four questions (Q3.5, 3.11, 3.9, and 3.10) aiming to evaluate their attitudes towards Vietnamese language transmission process, with a particular focus on some of its practical aspects. Question 3.5 aimed to assess parents' attitudes through the efforts and commitment that they put into the transmission process e.g. encouraging their children to speak Vietnamese. Question 3.11 sought parents' opinions on the importance of their children learning Vietnamese. Questions 3.9 and 3.10 tried to ascertain thinking on the question of responsibility and provision of

Vietnamese. Respondents' self-reported replies to these questions are presented in the following *Tables 6.9 – 6.11*.

**Table 6. 9 Attitudes towards Encouraging Children to Speak Vietnamese**  
Comparison between QAA group & QF group

	Q3.5: (i) Do you encourage your children to speak Vietnamese?													
	(ii) According to you, how much have your efforts been successful?													
	{1}							(ii)						
	Yes		No		Total		Very S		Little S		Not S		Total	
Respondents	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
QAA group	108	98	2	2	110	100	75	68	34	31	1	1	110	100
QF group	25	100	0	0	25	100	13	52	10	40	2	8	25	100

Results presented in *Table 6. 9* show that almost all respondents, who had children at the time of the questionnaire's completion, reported that they had actively encouraged their children to speak Vietnamese. There was no real difference in the two groups of respondents, with regard to this question. The results revealed from this question could be seen as positive attitudes, on the part of Vietnamese parents from both communities, Paris and Adelaide, towards transmission of the Vietnamese language to their children, many of whom were of the second generation. Results of (ii) show that QAA group respondents seemed to be more successful in their efforts in encouraging their children to learn Vietnamese than those in the QF group. The percentage of those, who evaluated their efforts as *very successful*, was 16% higher in the QAA group compared to those in the QF group. The rate of those who evaluated their success as little or none was higher in the QF group compared to the QAA group. This could be attributed to the fact that the Australian educational environment was more favourable for parents to be successful in encouraging their children to speak Vietnamese than those living in the French environment. It should be noted that 50 respondents in the QAA group and 35 in the QF group responded not applicable (NA) to Question 3.5 as they did not have children at the time of the questionnaire's completion.

This finding was again confirmed by evidence of memoirs, informal conversations with parents and observation data. It should be pointed out that sometimes there was inconsistency in respondents' replies to the questionnaire compared to what they expressed in their memoirs on the same question. For example, all four oral memoir contributors (Nos 1, 3, 4, 6) in the QF group, whose extracts were cited earlier in this Chapter, replied positively to Question 3.5 and yet the accounts of their oral memoirs pointed in the opposite direction. The sentiment expressed in their memoirs points to

the fact that they did not encourage their children speaking or learning Vietnamese for fear that it would interfere in the process of their children speaking and learning French.

With regard to parents' attitudes toward their children learning Vietnamese, results presented in *Table 6.10* below show clearly that QAA group respondents attributed more importance to their children's learning Vietnamese than those of the QF group.

**Table 6. 10 Attitudes towards Children Learning Vietnamese**

*Comparison between QAA group & QF group*

	Q 3.11: In your opinion, is it important that your children learn Vietnamese?							
	Very important		Relatively important		Not important		Total	
Respondents	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
QAA group	128	91	12	8	1	1	141	100
QF group	40	77	12	23	0	0	52	100

Evidence from the oral memoirs also confirmed this finding. The following extracts seem to summarise the views commonly held by Vietnamese parents living in Paris at the time of interview:

*Sở dĩ em chưa dạy (tiếng Việt) cho nó là vì vấn đề phát âm. Con của em nó học chưa cao, phần ở tiểu học nó còn học lớp thấp, nó mới bắt đầu vững cái vấn đề học đọc âm tiếng Pháp. Tuy cách phát âm tiếng Pháp và tiếng Việt giống nhau nhưng mà cách nối âm không giống nhau. thành ra em sợ là mình dạy như vậy thì nó lộn.*

*The reason for me not to teach Vietnamese to my children is because of the pronunciation issue. My children are still young, they are only in primary school and they have just started to master the French pronunciation system. Although the pronunciation of French alphabetic letters is similar to that of Vietnamese, the combination of syllables is very different. Therefore, I am afraid that by teaching Vietnamese to my children I will create confusion in their minds. (O. Memoir 1, female, born 1963, arrived in France 1984)*

This respondent did not want her children to learn Vietnamese at an early age for she feared that it would interfere in the process of her children learning French. It seemed to her at the time that it was more important for her children to concentrate on learning French well.

*Khi cháu còn nhỏ tôi muốn cho nó học để nói sỏi một thứ tiếng thôi, tiếng Pháp. Bây giờ thì nó bắt đầu lớn rồi, thì nó có thể học một thứ tiếng khác dễ dàng. Còn trong khi mà nó đi học, tại trường lớp nó học, người ta đã có dạy những tiếng như là tiếng Anh hoặc Italia hay là gì đó rồi, thì những văn hóa đó thì cần hơn là tiếng Việt.*

*When my son was young, I wanted him to learn how to speak well only one language, French. Now he is older, he can study another language easily. When he was at school he had been learning other languages such as English and Italian. These languages and cultures were more important for him to learn than Vietnamese. (O. Memoir 4, female, born 1923, arrived in France 1952)*

Oral memoir respondent No 4 was married to a French soldier in Vietnam. She joined her husband when he returned to France in 1952. It was understandable that she wanted her adopted son (her sister's child, born in Vietnam) to master the French language and culture before anything else. From a practical point of view, she was correct to think that the knowledge of the Vietnamese language was less important than English or Italian for her son's future in France or in Europe. At the time of interview, she also stated that she wanted her son to learn Vietnamese, when he got older so that he could communicate with relatives in Vietnam. Her adopted son was also an oral memoir contributor (No 13). It was very interesting to note that he chose to be interviewed in English instead of French, because he could speak English reasonably well. However, in the account of his memoir, he expressed regret that he was not able to speak Vietnamese when he returned to Vietnam to visit his natural parents and his brothers and sisters; he said that he felt very frustrated and totally lost in Vietnam.

**Table 6. 11 Attitudes towards the Provision of Vietnamese Language Teaching**  
*Comparison between QAA group & QF group*

	Q3.9: Do you think that the Ed Department has the responsibility to													
	to teach Vietnamese so that your children have the opportunity to learn it?													
	Q3.10: If no then who do you think has that responsibility?													
	Q3.9						Q3.10							
	Yes		No		Total		Parents		Reli Com		Viet Com		Total	
Respondents	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
QAA group	157	98	3	2	160	100	16	41	12	31	11	28	39	100
QF group	26	43	34	57	60	100	18	56	9	25	7	20	34	101

It was very interesting to discover the difference in thinking between the two groups of respondents in relation to Vietnamese language provision and responsibility. Results revealed in *Table 6.11* showed that almost all respondents in the QAA group thought it was the responsibility of the Education Department to provide a Vietnamese language program for their children, while more than half in the QF group saw it as the parents' responsibility. Vietnamese organisations shared some responsibility with parents to provide the opportunity for children to learn Vietnamese. This was recognised even by those Vietnamese-Australian respondents who considered that it was the Education Department's responsibility to provide opportunities for Vietnamese learning. This difference in thinking probably came as a result of the different education policies in the

two countries. Vietnamese language programs at primary and secondary levels were more readily available in mainstream schools in Adelaide than in Paris (see Chapter 5). Thus, Vietnamese parents in Adelaide expected more responsibility from a mainstream institution such as the Education Department, to provide the opportunity for their children to learn Vietnamese than those in Paris. Memoir evidence also indicated that many Vietnamese parents in Paris saw Vietnamese language education as an activity that parents and Vietnamese organisations had the responsibility to provide for their children.

### ***Language and Identity***

The final issue in relation to the general maintenance of Vietnamese in Australia and France concerns the extent to which the language was regarded as a dimension of their Vietnamese cultural identity. In the words of Edwards and Chisholm, (1987: 393-4)

*While there has been a great deal written about the language-identity relationship much of it is based upon assumptions. Very little, in fact, has been done to tap the opinions of ordinary individuals.*

In this particular study, therefore, question Q 3.7 of the questionnaire aimed to assess respondents' attitudes towards the Vietnamese language as a component of Vietnamese cultural identity. For this purpose, respondents were asked to rate the importance of Vietnamese-speaking ability as a marker of identity, using a three-level scale labeled, as *very important, relatively important and not important*. Results of respondents' self-reported replies to this question are presented in the following **Table 6.12**.

**Table 6.12 Importance of Vietnamese-Speaking Ability**

*Comparison between QAA group & QF group*

	Q 3.7: In your opinion, is it important for a Vietnamese person to be able to speak Vietnamese?							
	Very important		Relatively important		Not important		Total	
Respondents	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
QAA group	156	98	4	2	0	0	160	100
QF group	56	93	4	7	0	0	60	100

The most significant finding was that none of the respondents thought that the ability of a Vietnamese person to speak Vietnamese was of *no importance*. Rather a very high majority in both groups (98% and 93%) thought it *very important* (**Table 6.12**). The few who thought it *relatively important* were all young people from the second generation. The overall results of this question, as well as evidence from memoirs and informal discussions with the respondents from both groups, showed some difference in attitude

between those in the QAA group in Adelaide and those in the QF group in Paris. Those in the QAA group seemed to show a stronger positive attitude towards recognizing the importance of the Vietnamese language as an essential component of their cultural identity than those in the QF group. It was also clear that, compared to the first generation respondents, the second generation thought the ability to speak Vietnamese was less important as an attribute of Vietnamese cultural identity. This finding was equally applicable to both groups of respondents in Adelaide and in Paris.

Although no respondent had totally rejected the proposal that Vietnamese-speaking ability was an essential ingredient of a Vietnamese identity (*Table 6.12*), accounts in the oral and written memoirs showed a greater diversity of thoughts and feelings on this question. A number of respondents argued that the Vietnamese language was important, but that even without the ability to speak the language, you could still be fully Vietnamese if you knew how to uphold the “Vietnamese Spirit”, which is called in Vietnamese “Tinh Thần Việt-nam” or “Tâm Tình Việt-nam”. One must also live according to the Vietnamese moral codes of conduct to be considered a true Vietnamese. So far, no one has been able to define clearly what constitutes that “Vietnamese Spirit”. It is a “sacred”, noble sentiment, a concept which appears to be abstract and yet is so real in the mind of so many Vietnamese people. The following extracts from memoirs reflect that line of argument well.

*Tôi nghĩ điều quan trọng cái người mà còn Việt nam không hẳn là người đó phải nói được tiếng Việt, mà người đó nghĩ họ là người Việt nam. Họ có bốn phận yêu thương, gìn giữ bảo vệ hai chữ Việt nam của họ, cho dù họ nói tiếng Pháp hay tiếng Anh không sao, nếu tình dân tộc còn trong lòng thì họ còn là người Việt nam. Nếu họ nói tiếng Việt giỏi mà họ không có tâm tình Việt nam thì đối với tôi là họ trôi ra biển rồi, họ đi lạc rồi.*

*I think that the important element, which characterises a Vietnamese person, does not necessarily reside on that person's ability to speak Vietnamese but in his/her thinking and believing that he is Vietnamese. A Vietnamese person has the responsibility to love and protect the name of his country, Vietnam. It doesn't matter whether that person speaks French or English, if his love for his compatriots fills his heart, he is truly Vietnamese. Those who speak Vietnamese well but don't have the Vietnamese spirit, in my opinion, they have already been lost in the ocean. (O. Memoir 53, male, born 1944, arrived in Australia 1979)*

Respondent 53, a prominent leader of the Vietnamese community in Australia, and a political activist defined “tinh thần Việt-nam - Vietnamese Spirit” as the love of his country and of his compatriots. In his opinion, patriotic love was the most important element or perhaps the only one which made a person a true Vietnamese. It was even



more important than a person's ability to speak Vietnamese. In this sense, "tinh thần Việt-nam" is equivalent to patriotism or nationalism. The following memoir comments from a respondent in France conveys the same sentiment.

*Thiết nghĩ tiếng Việt nói được càng tốt, vấn đề quan trọng nhất là giữ cho con cái được cái tinh thần Việt nam. Đó là điều then chốt, còn cái ngôn ngữ nó chỉ là sự biểu lộ. Theo tôi nghĩ giữ được tinh hoa của Việt nam là căn bản thành ra tôi cố gắng làm chuyện đó đối với con cái tôi.*

*In my opinion, to be able to speak Vietnamese is a good thing but the most important thing is to keep the Vietnamese Spirit alive. This is the core element of the Vietnamese identity and language is only the expression of that core component. I think it is crucial for us to be able to maintain the most precious elements of our Vietnamese culture and I have tried my best to do just that with my children. (Oral Memoir 6, male, born 1943, arrived in France 1973)*

This way of thinking has been very common among the Vietnamese living both outside and inside of Vietnam. History had indeed proved that the Vietnamese were heroic people; they had, on numerous occasions, succeeded in their struggle to defend the independence of their country, against the invasion of foreign powers, namely China, France and The United States of America. Thus, this strong patriotic sentiment must be in the Vietnamese blood and surely is one of the important attributes of the Vietnamese cultural identity.

It was interesting to discover that, almost all of the sixteen written memoir contributors of second generation in the QAY group, recognised the Vietnamese language as one of the core values forming the Vietnamese cultural identity. This thinking is well reflected in the following extracts of memoirs:

*Knowing your language is an important factor that shapes your identity. You can still be a Vietnamese person without knowing Vietnamese, but only if you have no choice e.g. you were adopted into an Australian family, however if you were given the opportunity to learn Vietnamese and you demolish it, you are not one hundred percent Vietnamese. You are only physically Vietnamese. A true Vietnamese never gives up Vietnamese and will try with all of their potential to learn the language. (W. Memoir 2, Y 11 student, born in Australia)*

*If I were to be a person who could not speak the Vietnamese language, it would be a disgrace for me to call myself as a complete Vietnamese. This is because I would just be like all other Australians who speak English; the slightest difference may just be my Vietnamese lifestyle and family, if not only my Asian/Vietnamese appearance. (W. Memoir 5, Y 11 student, born in Australia)*

These two memoir writers claimed that without the Vietnamese language, a person could not be considered a complete Vietnamese. They also thought that the physical

appearance of a person with Asian characteristics, such as yellow skin, black hair, and brown eyes, made a Vietnamese look different from a person who came from Europe or Africa but it did not really distinguish a Vietnamese from other Asian persons, for example a Chinese, a Filipino or a Cambodian. In this sense, the Asian physical appearance was not an obvious marker of “Vietnamese-ness” at the physical level. However, the ability to speak Vietnamese made individuals immediately recognisable by their compatriots as a Vietnamese. Sometimes the ability to speak Vietnamese can become a very useful instrument to establish affiliation and camaraderie with others, especially when you find yourself in the company of many Asian people from different countries including Vietnam. These positive attitudes towards the Vietnamese language and the recognition of its unique relationship with Vietnamese personal cultural identity were not often expressed in the memoirs or questionnaire comments among respondents of the second generation in the QF group in Paris.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter compared the patterns of Vietnamese language proficiency, use and attitudes revealed by two groups of respondents, namely the QF group from Paris and the QAA group from Adelaide, who were the main participants of this study. These three aspects of language experiences provide fundamental information and insights into the processes of Vietnamese language maintenance and transmission.

Language proficiency is surely the starting point. A language, quite simply, cannot be maintained or transmitted unless there are those who can understand and speak it, and equally important for its long-life secure transmission, the writing and reading aspects of the language must be maintained as well. The results from all the methods of research that were used revealed that, within the groups studied, the Vietnamese language maintenance level was equally strong among respondents of first generation Vietnamese immigrants in both communities in Paris and in Adelaide. There was no clear evidence of language shift or language loss among those who arrived in the host country after the age of twelve. Respondents’ linguistic usage patterns pointed clearly to the conclusion that the Vietnamese language enjoyed a very high status in the home, among members of the extended Vietnamese family in the host countries and in Vietnam, outside the home among first generation of Vietnamese immigrants in both communities in Paris and in Adelaide.

For the second generation, Vietnamese language was mainly used as a means to communicate within the home with parents, grandparents and those who could not speak the language of the host country. Evidence also showed that Vietnamese parents in Adelaide seemed to be more committed to the ideology and processes to make sure that the Vietnamese language was being successfully transmitted to their children than those in Paris. So far, the proficiency and usage patterns revealed seemed to be consistent with the reported attitudes of the respondents. There was, however, a closer correlation between attitudes and tendencies or attitudes and activation with regard to the Vietnamese linguistic values among respondents from Adelaide than those from Paris across all categories and generations. The overall findings of this chapter are consistent with the results of Clyne's (1991 & 2005) studies which claimed that there was a very high rate of Vietnamese language maintenance and low rate of language shift among Vietnamese immigrants in Australia.

Evidence from this chapter showed that Vietnamese people have been successful in keeping the Vietnamese language alive among those of first generation and generation 1.5 immigrants in both communities (Paris and Adelaide). The Vietnamese language has been well transmitted to the second generation in Adelaide but not with the same level of success in Paris. Evidence from this chapter also indicated an overwhelming recognition of the importance of Vietnamese language in the life the Vietnamese immigrants in Adelaide and in Paris to a lesser degree. It was found that there was a very close link between a person's ability to speak Vietnamese and his/her Vietnamese identity. A high majority of respondents in Adelaide and a smaller number of respondents in Paris considered Vietnamese as a clear marker of their personal cultural identity. Vietnamese is seen by these participants, as one of the core cultural values forming their personal cultural identity in the host countries.

## **Chapter 7: Language Transmission and Maintenance among Second Generation Vietnamese in Australia**

### ***Introduction***

The 2001 Census data shows that the Vietnamese constituted the fifth largest ethnic group in Australia with 156,598 persons born of Vietnamese ancestry. The Vietnamese community is a young community compared with other migrant communities with more than 80% of people under 45 years of age in 2001. This community also consisted of a high proportion of those born in Australia (40,640 persons or 26%), as well as those born in refugee camps in South East Asian countries, such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Thailand, Cambodia and the Philippines who came to Australia with their parents at a very young age. Given the size and the significance of this group, as well as the availability of data collected, it is appropriate to devote this chapter to explore in-depth the question of linguistic transmission and maintenance among second generation Vietnamese in Australia. This chapter is only based on the Australian data for two reasons: firstly, it was difficult to obtain equivalent data from the second generation Vietnamese-French respondents, and secondly, there was no comparable data on Vietnamese language education provision in France at the time, to what has been discussed for the Australian situation in Chapter 5.

Based on the set of data generated from 180 questionnaire responses and 26 memoirs from the QAY group of respondents, as well as relevant data from other sources, this chapter first examines the general picture of Vietnamese language usage in the home in Australia and in South Australia. Second, it considers the participants' linguistic skills and usage in various domains and with different groups of interlocutors, in order to determine their attitudes and tendencies towards Vietnamese language transmission and maintenance. Third, this chapter explores issues concerning the participants' experiences of learning Vietnamese in the school environment, in order to assess the effectiveness of Vietnamese programs and make appropriate predictions regarding the survival of Vietnamese language at literacy level in Australia. Finally, this chapter discusses a number of factors affecting the Vietnamese language transmission and development for second and future generations of Vietnamese-Australians.

## ***Vietnamese Language Spoken at Home in Australia***

The 2001 Census data indicated that there were 174,236 persons who spoke Vietnamese at home. Vietnamese ranked fifth of the top ten languages spoken at home in Australia at the time. A comparison between 1996 and 2001 Census data showed an increase of 30% but the change over the decade from 1991 to 2001 showed an increase of 95% in the number of persons using Vietnamese at home. These figures represent substantial increases in Vietnamese language usage and provide a positive indication of Vietnamese language maintenance in Australia. (*Tables 7.1 & 7. 2*).

***Table 7. 1 Language Other than English Spoken at Home in 2001***

<b>Community</b>	<b>Persons</b>	<b>Australian population %</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>% change 1996-2001</b>
Chinese	401,357	2.11	1	+23.8
Italian	353,605	1.86	2	-3.7
Greek	263,717	1.39	3	+0.05
Arabic	209,372	1.10	4	+2.9
<b>Vietnamese</b>	<b>174,236</b>	<b>0.91</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>+30.1</b>
Spanish	93,593	0.49	6	+8.6
Filipino	78,878	0.41	7	+17.2
German	76,443	0.40	8	-21.1
Macedonian	71,994	0.37	9	+5.6
Croatian	69,851	0.36	10	+4.7

*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001 Census*

***Table 7. 2 Vietnamese Population in Australia, Censuses 1991 - 2001***

	<b>Australian Population</b>	<b>Persons Born in Vietnam</b>	<b>Persons Speaking Vietnamese at Home</b>	<b>% of Australian Population Speaking Vietnamese</b>	<b>Rank of Vietnamese as Language used at Home</b>
<b>1991 Census</b>	<b>16,771,700</b>	<b>121, 813</b>	<b>89, 350</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>1996 Census</b>	<b>17,752,807</b>	<b>151, 054</b>	<b>134, 001</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>5th</b> (After Italian, Chinese, Greek and Arabic)
<b>2001 Census</b>	<b>18,769,249</b>	<b>154, 831</b>	<b>174, 236</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>5th</b> (After Chinese, Italian, Greek and Arabic)
<b>% Change 1996 -2001</b>	<b>+5.7</b>	<b>+2.5</b>	<b>+30.1</b>	<b>+ 0.1</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>1991 -2001</b>	<b>+11.9</b>	<b>+27.1</b>	<b>+ 95</b>	<b>+ 0.3</b>	

*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1991, 1996 & 2001 Censuses*

**Table 7. 2** shows that the change in the number of people speaking Vietnamese at home was 27.6% higher than the rate of those born in Vietnam between 1996 and 2001. This indicates that many home users of Vietnamese must have been born in Australia, in other words, they were second generation Vietnamese-Australians.

Clyne (2005:12) claimed that Vietnamese had the lowest rate of language shift among the second generation, compared to other migrant groups in Australia. His age distribution

table of home language users below gives us some insights into the future prospects for community languages and for the Vietnamese language in particular. In fact, the 0-14 language data from the 2001 Census indicates that, among the top ten languages, the three which were most notably represented in the population of compulsory schooling and pre-school age, in each of the five major capitals were Arabic, Vietnamese and Cantonese followed by Greek, Mandarin and Italian as shown in *Table 7.3* below.

*Table 7.3 Community Language Home Users Aged 0 -14, in Five Major Capitals 2001*

<b>Sydney</b>	<b>Melbourne</b>	<b>Adelaide</b>	<b>Brisbane</b>	<b>Perth</b>
Arabic 37 217	Vietnamese 15 395	Greek 3272	Vietnamese 3236	Vietnamese 2753
Cantonese 21 199	Greek 14 446	Vietnamese 2952	Samoan 2323	Italian 2294
Vietnamese 15 243	Arabic 12 404	Italian 2493	Cantonese 2219	Cantonese 2059
Mandarin 11 320	Cantonese 10 241	Cantonese 1094	Mandarin 2099	Mandarin 1816
Greek 10 464	Italian 9434	Arabic 956	Spanish 1117	Arabic 1462
Spanish 6128	Mandarin 6540	Polish 728	Greek 1060	Indonesian 1066
Korean 5906	Turkish 6381	Khmer 673	Hindi 878	Macedonian 858
Filipino 5758	Macedonian 4178	Serbian 619	Arabic 836	Spanish 794
Italian 5699	Spanish 3349	Mandarin 558	Italian 664	Serbian 712
Hindi 5515	Sinhala 2486	Spanish 486	German 556	Malay 567

*Source: Clyne, 2005: 11, Table 1.3*

*Table 7.3* shows that Vietnamese was in top position in three major capitals, namely Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth, in second position for Adelaide and in third position for Sydney. Clyne (2005: 10-11) pointed out that “apart from some smaller languages such as Somali (with 40.2 % of speakers in the 0-14 age group), it was Arabic and Vietnamese that were the languages with the largest percentage of young speakers (25.9 % and 23.6% respectively). Clyne explained that “a large number of young people among the speakers of a language, reflects either recent immigration or high language maintenance and transmission rates.” In the case of Vietnamese, it probably reflects both of the above, as the Vietnamese group can still be considered as a recent migrant group which has been in Australia for just over thirty years at the time, in comparison to other migrant groups such as the Greek, Italian or Chinese. It is interesting to note that the number of young users of Vietnamese in Sydney was less than those in Melbourne and yet the Vietnamese population in Sydney is larger than that in Melbourne. This almost certainly reflects the fact that historically, Vietnamese language programs in New South Wales, both at ethnic

and in mainstream schools, were established much later than those in Victoria or South Australia and they have not been as well promoted.

### ***Vietnamese Language Spoken at Home in South Australia***

The 2001 Census showed that the three most common languages other than English spoken at home in South Australia were: Italian: 40,176 (2.8% of total SA population), Greek: 27,363 (1.9%) and Vietnamese: 12,582 (0.9%). In 2001 there were 12,582 persons in South Australia using Vietnamese at home, while in 1996 there had been only 11,079 persons speaking Vietnamese at home. These figures showed an increase of 13.8%, which was an indication that second generation Vietnamese were using Vietnamese at home more and more as the number of people who came from Vietnam during this period was almost nil.

***Table 7. 4 Vietnamese Community in South Australia, Census 1996 & 2001***

	<b>Persons Born in Vietnam</b>	<b>Persons Speaking Vietnamese at Home</b>	<b>% of Australian Population using Vietnamese</b>	<b>Rank of Vietnamese</b>
<b>1996 Census</b>	<b>10, 667</b>	<b>11,079</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>4th</b> (after Italian, Greek and German)
<b>2001 Census</b>	<b>10,441</b>	<b>12, 582</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>3rd</b> (after Italian and Greek)
<b>% Change 1996-2001</b>	<b>- 2.1</b>	<b>+13.8</b>	<b>+0.1</b>	

*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001 Census*

A comparison between the number of those born of Vietnamese ancestry (11,566 persons) with those who used Vietnamese at home (12,582 persons) in the 2001 Census, shows the surprising fact that the number of persons speaking Vietnamese at home was higher than those born of Vietnamese ancestry. This possibly means that the Vietnamese language was used at home by every person of Vietnamese ancestry in South Australia at that time. Another explanation is that there were people born of Vietnamese ancestry as well as some other people, who also used Vietnamese at home, such as the Chinese who came to Australia from Vietnam. From these figures it would appear that Vietnamese language usage in the home domain was almost 100% among Vietnamese-South Australians in 2001.

### ***The Data for this Chapter***

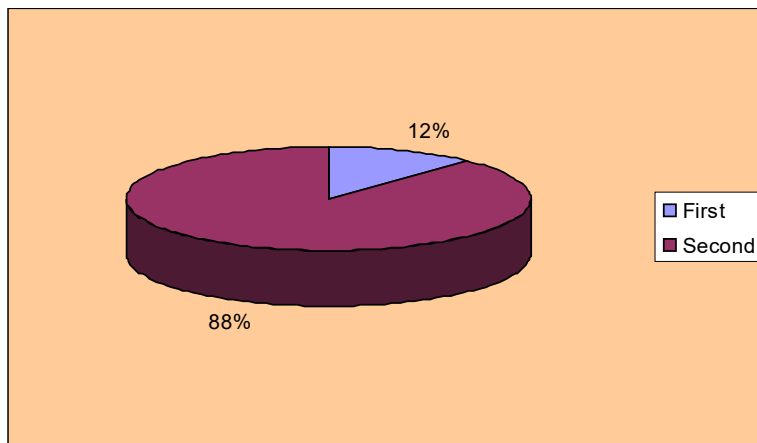
The data used for this chapter are derived from a group of 180 participants aged 12-25 in 2004, out of the total group of 400 questionnaire respondents. In the context of the whole research, this group was coded as QAY group (Questionnaire group of Young Vietnamese-Australians) (see Chapters 3 & 4). The statistical data used for this chapter came mainly from the analysis of 180 responses of these participants, to a very lengthy questionnaire seeking information on their personal and educational background. The questionnaire also contained questions asking them to describe and evaluate their linguistic skills, their Vietnamese language usage, as well as their educational experiences with a particular emphasis on their experience of studying Vietnamese. However, the essential cultural data used in this chapter were collected from 26 memoirs (16 written memoirs and 10 oral memoirs) contributed by participants who were also among the 180 questionnaire respondents. (*See Questionnaire example for QAY group in Appendix 3*).

It should be pointed out that this group can in no way be regarded as representative of the whole population of second generation Vietnamese in Australia or in South Australia and that the experience of this group of participants should be considered and interpreted as belonging to them alone.

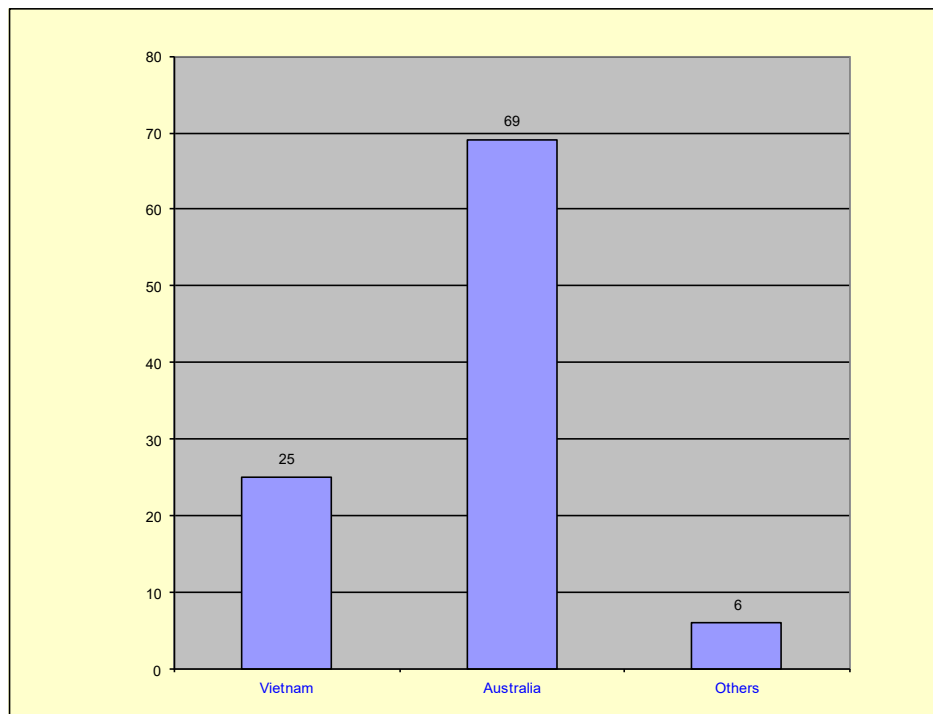
**Relevant Characteristics of QAY Group.** The concrete profile of the QAY group has already been discussed in Chapter 4 in relation to other groups of participants. Therefore, in this chapter, only relevant characteristics of the group such as their birth place, educational level and their linguistic skills are mentioned in order to provide an appropriate context for the analysis of other cultural information derived from their 26 memoirs. *Chart 7.1* below shows that among the 180 respondents of the QAY group, 158 participants (88%) were classified as second generation Vietnamese and among these 124 (68.9%) were born in Australia, 11 (6.1%) were born in other countries, and 23 (12.7%) were born in Vietnam, but arrived in Australia before the age of twelve. Only 22 (12%) participants in the QAY group belonged to the first generation Vietnamese, defined as those who came to Australia after the age of twelve. However, none of these twenty-two had completed high school when they came to Australia.



**Chart 7. 1 QAY Group by Migration Generation (N = 180)**

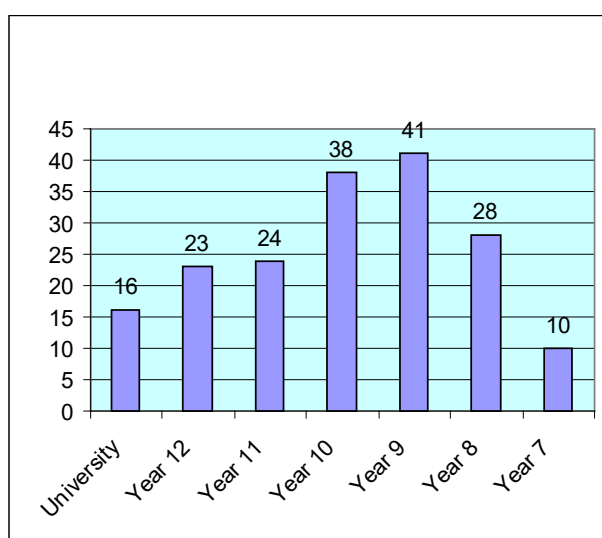


**Chart 7. 2 QAY Group by Birth Place in Percentages (N=180)**



**QAY Group by Gender and Educational Level:** There were 105 (58%) females and 75 (42%) males in this group of participants. Thus, the number of females is greater than males. As shown in *Chart 7. 3* this group consisted of sixteen university students, twenty-three Year 12 students, twenty-four Year 11, thirty-eight Year 10, forty-one Year 9, twenty-eight Year 8 and ten Year 7 students. Thus, the majority of this group were middle high school students at the time of the questionnaire.

**Chart 7.3 QAY Respondents' Educational Levels in Numbers (N=180)**



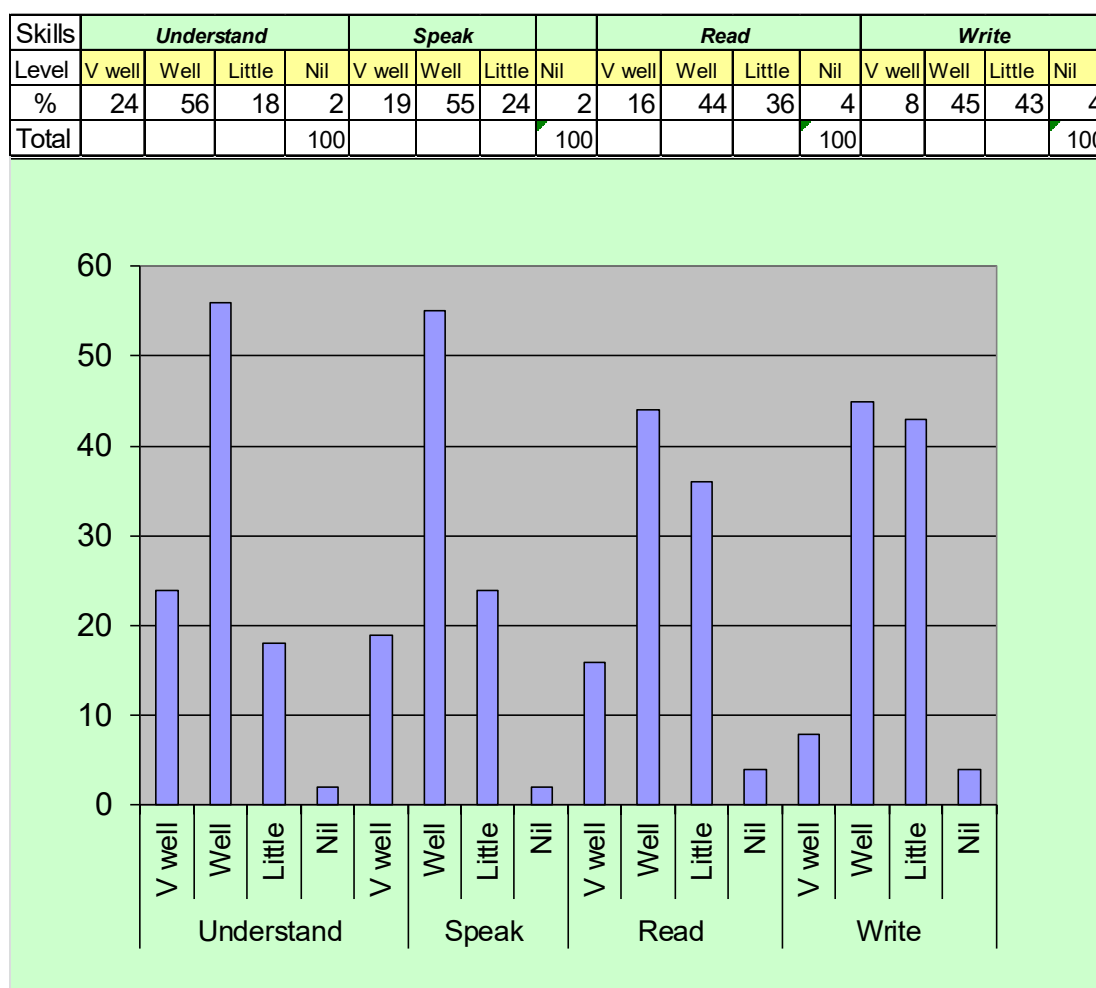
## ***Participants' Linguistic Skills***

### **Vietnamese Language Skills**

Through one of the questions in the questionnaire, the participants were asked to grade their own Vietnamese and English levels in four macro language skills, namely *Understanding, Speaking, Reading and Writing*, according to a four standard scale (*Very Good, Good, Little and Nil*). Each of these four macro skills are examined in the discussion that follows based on the cultural data from the twenty-six memoirs and the results of questionnaire responses summarised in **Chart 7.4** below.

***Vietnamese understanding skill.*** As shown in **Chart 7.4**, only 2% of respondents reported that they did not understand Vietnamese at all. More than half (56%) said that they understood Vietnamese 'Well', while almost a quarter (24%) among this group of participants, said that they understood Vietnamese 'Very well' and another 18% understood a 'little'. Thus, the proportion of those who could understand Vietnamese was quite high (80%). This is a positive indication of language maintenance and transmission among second generation Vietnamese. Children born of Vietnamese parents in Australia usually learn to speak Vietnamese first with parents, grandparents, relatives and friends in a natural environment of the home, so their ability to understand Vietnamese comes naturally and often stays with them throughout their adolescent years, even if they did not formally learn Vietnamese at school in later years, their passive capacity of understanding the language remains.

*Chart 7. 4 QAY Respondents' Vietnamese Language Skills (N = 180)*



**Vietnamese speaking skill.** Chart 7.4 shows that only 2% of respondents stated that they did not speak Vietnamese, while more than half (55%) said that they spoke Vietnamese 'Well' and 19% said 'Very well'. It was noted that the percentage of those who claimed to speak Vietnamese a 'little' or 'not at all' was (26%), somewhat higher than those who understood Vietnamese little and not at all (20%). These figures seem to be consistent, as in a normal language acquisition process, the speaking skill is harder to acquire than the understanding skill. Observation data also shows that children born in Australia of Vietnamese parents usually learn to speak Vietnamese first in the home. Their exposure to the Vietnamese language during the early years before they start school is very constant, especially when grandparents are the main carers and language transmitters. Therefore, children's oral competence in everyday language is relatively high.

It should be pointed that all of the twenty-six memoir contributors reported that they spoke Vietnamese well or very well, but almost all of them used English in their oral or written memoirs. Two oral memoir contributors started the interview in Vietnamese but half way through the interview, they changed to English because they did not have the

required terminology and language structures to respond in Vietnamese to the more complicated interview questions, although they understood the questions in Vietnamese perfectly well. The researcher's classroom teaching experience at the time also indicated that students of second generation Vietnamese found speaking more difficult than writing, as expressed in the following memoir extract from a student who was studying Vietnamese as a Year 12 subject in 2005.

*I find speaking in Vietnamese more difficult than actually writing because when you are engaged in an oral conversation, you don't have a great deal of time on your hands to find the right words. Whereas in writing, although there may be time restrictions, it is much easier seeing as we have more time to think of the right expressions so as to respond. (W. Memoir 6, Y 12 student, born in Australia)*

**Vietnamese reading skill.** Chart 7.4 shows that only 4% of the QAY respondents stated that they could not read Vietnamese at all and 36% claimed to read a 'little', while nearly half (44%) said they could read 'well' and 16% 'very well'. These results appear to be consistent with the data the researcher observed while teaching Vietnamese at Year 11 and Year 12 at the time. A high majority of students of second generation in the Vietnamese classes found it hard to read Vietnamese fluently, especially literary texts in Vietnamese. This was due to the fact that these students hardly ever read anything else apart from what the teachers required them to read in class. There was no need for them to read books, newspapers or magazines written in Vietnamese, so their reading skill was limited, compared to their oral skills. The following memoir writer captured well the general sentiment experienced by most second-generation learners of Vietnamese with regard to reading and writing in Vietnamese:

*The most difficult thing about learning Vietnamese for me is the writing and reading. Reading is not hard as writing for me, I can read most of the words, but just some words may take me some time to spell out. I find speaking the easiest, because am used to it, and I have been speaking in Vietnamese most of my life and every day. (W. Memoir 10, Y 12 student, born in Australia)*

**Vietnamese writing skill.** Chart 7.4 shows that only 8% of the QAY respondents claimed that they wrote Vietnamese 'very well', while 46% said 'well' and almost half (47%) reported that they could only write Vietnamese a 'little' or 'not at all'. This is a disappointing revelation considering the fact that a large majority of these participants had attended Vietnamese classes for a number of years in primary and secondary schools in South Australia and yet almost half felt that their Vietnamese writing skill was very low compared to other skills. Among the twenty-six memoir contributors, there were many who found the experience of learning to read and write in Vietnamese particularly difficult as expressed in the following memoir:

*I find myself very talented in Vietnamese. My thoughts, expression and speaking ability could be described as exceptional. However, when it comes to putting these skills to paper, I begin to struggle. I have many mistakes in my writing regarding the “dictation”. My very own explanation for this is that I lack the practice or opportunity to write in Vietnamese.*

*(W. Memoir 14, Y 12 student, born in Australia)*

This student assessed herself as gifted in Vietnamese. In fact, her Vietnamese oral skill was outstanding. Unlike the other second generation Vietnamese in the class, she spoke Vietnamese with a natural native speaker accent, style and fluency. However, she had difficulty in writing Vietnamese with correct tone marks and the right spelling of certain word-endings. These mistakes occurred when she wrote essays in Vietnamese and in doing a dictation. She was perfectly correct to say that these mistakes happened because of the lack of practice and opportunity to write in Vietnamese. Indeed, there was no real need for her to write in Vietnamese, apart from a few pieces of writing required for the assessment of Vietnamese as a SACE Stage two subject. She studied Vietnamese through an ethnic school which offered Vietnamese after school hours for only one session of two and a half hours per week. Thus, the opportunity for students to write Vietnamese in class was very limited compared to other mainstream language programs where students usually had one language lesson a day, and four or five lessons a week.

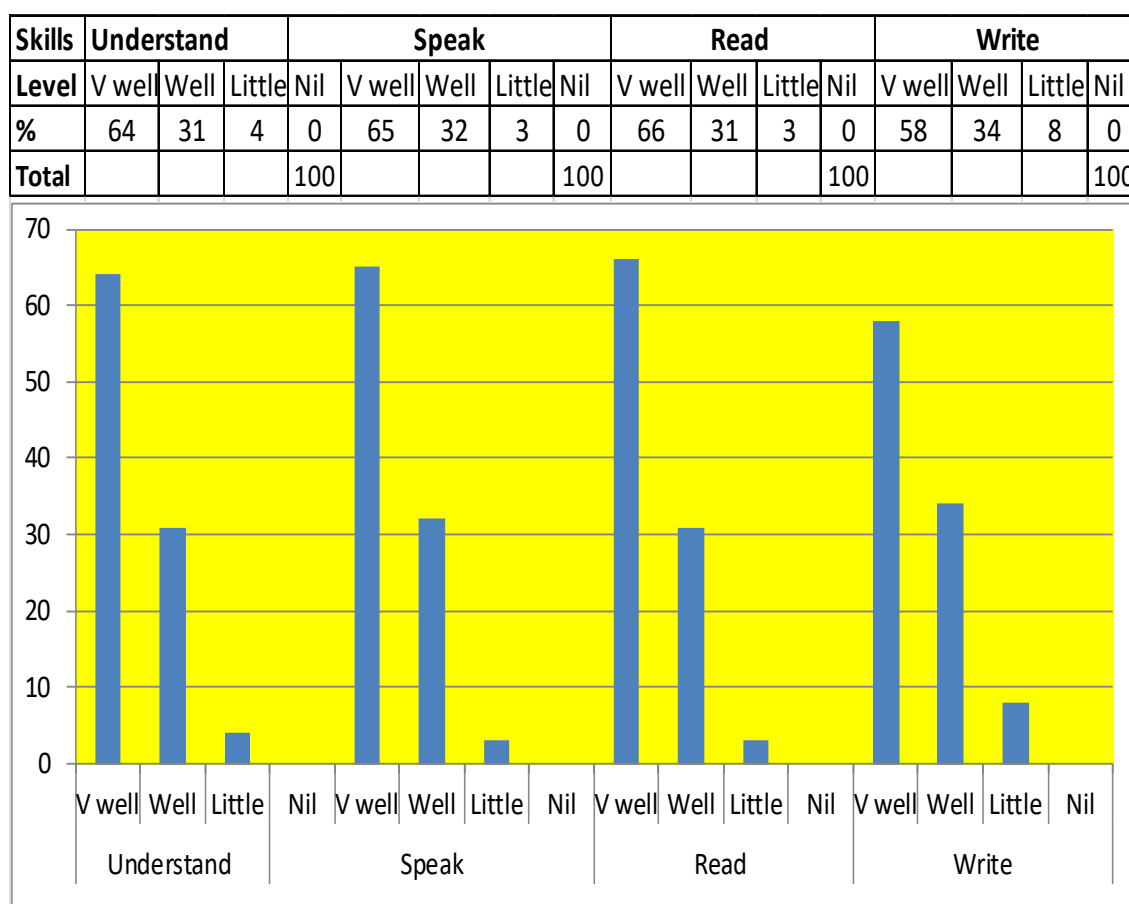
Both statistical data and cultural data clearly show that, in the process of acquiring the four main Vietnamese language skills, the participants rated their skills in the following order of difficulty and competence: *Understanding, Speaking, Reading and Writing*. Observations through teaching and assessing Vietnamese language at the time revealed to the researcher a relatively high level of English interference in the way that second generation Vietnamese speak, read and write Vietnamese. These students made the similar mistakes in pronunciation, grammatical structures, idiomatic expressions and style as non-Vietnamese background students learning Vietnamese.

It could be argued that there were some concerns in terms of the reliability and validity of data based on the self-assessment method against the objective assessment from another person, for example, in this instance, the teacher involved in the assessment of Vietnamese language skills of these participants. Evidence of this study shows that the overall proficiency in Vietnamese language skills of this particular group of participants was very high. The majority of this group could be considered as competent in Vietnamese. This could be seen as one of the positive indicators of Vietnamese language maintenance and transmission to second generation Vietnamese in Australia.

## English Language Skills

*Chart 7.5* below shows that the QAY participants rated themselves as very competent in all four macro English skills. In fact, 64-66% of the participants stated that they could understand, speak and read English ‘very well’ and 58% reported their English writing skills as ‘very well’. Thus, their writing skill was rated somewhat lower than the other three language skills. More than third of the group (31-34%) considered they could understand, speak and read English well. A very small number (3-4%) reported that they could understand, speak and read English only a little. There was no participant who could not understand, speak, read or write English. These results did not come as a surprise, since English is the medium of instruction in Australian mainstream schools. The amount of time that the participants used English in their everyday life was closed to one hundred per cent. For those who were born in Australia, English is considered as their dominant language. Though they claimed to be competent in English, none of the twenty-six memoir contributors chose straight English as a subject at Year 12 level, while only two did English as a second language subject (ESL) for the end of high school examination.

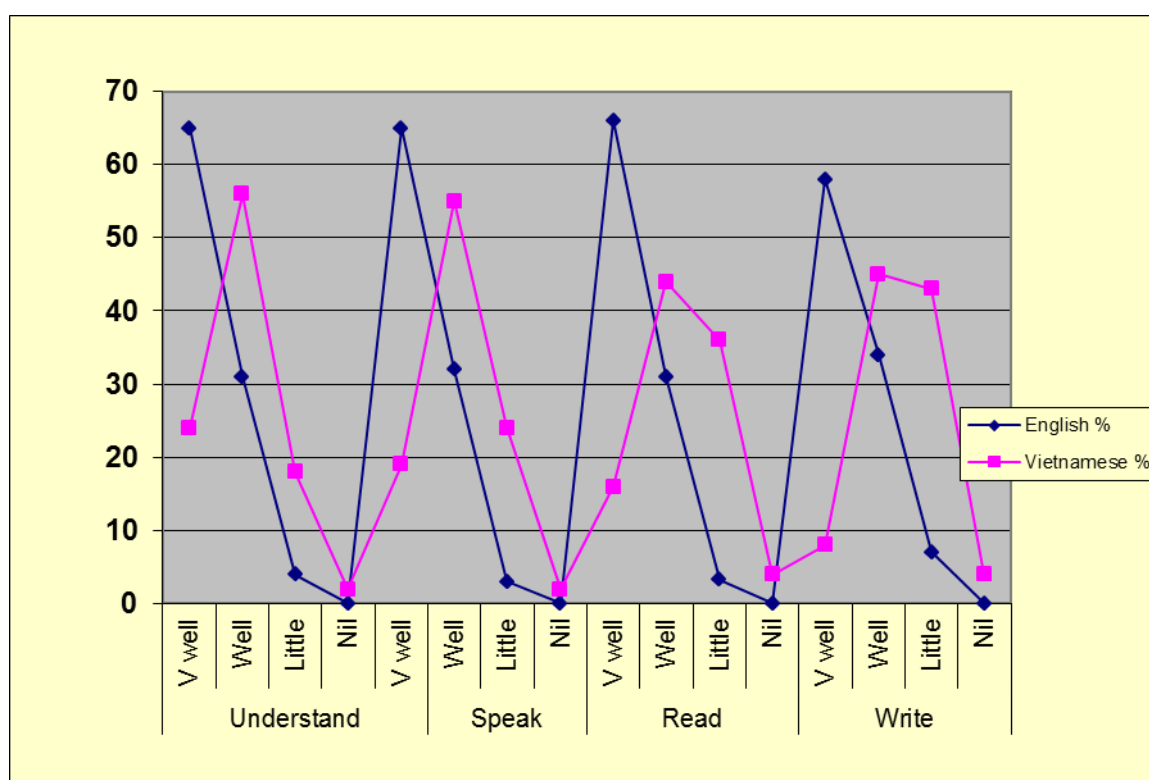
*Chart 7. 5 QAY Respondents’ English Language Skills (N = 180)*



The comparison in *Chart 7.6* below shows that the participants were more competent in English than in Vietnamese. They were bilingual but not balanced bilinguals, as their competence in four Vietnamese macro skills were lower compared with their English skills. This explains why second generation Vietnamese found it much easier to communicate with each other in English than in Vietnamese. They used their Vietnamese skills only in situations where people did not understand English, such as in the home domain. Linguistic skills need to be used regularly, otherwise they become gradually eroded. The time and opportunity for these participants to use English was much greater than for Vietnamese, given the fact that they were exposed to English all day at school, and when they came home they continued to use English with their siblings. Because of the busy life of their parents and also because of the pressure of their homework, the participants often did not have much time for talking in Vietnamese with their parents or grandparents. So the amount of time that they were exposed to Vietnamese language each day was limited. If these conditions persisted, their oral language skills in Vietnamese are likely to be eroded in the future.

*Chart 7. 6 Comparison between English and Vietnamese Proficiency, QAY Group (N = 180)*

	Understand				Speak				Read				Write			
	V well	Well	Little	Nil	V well	Well	Little	Nil	V well	Well	Little	Nil	V well	Well	Little	Nil
English %	65	31	4	0	65	32	3	0	66	31	3.3	0	58	34	7	0
Vietnamese %	24	56	18	2	19	55	24	2	16	44	36	4	8	45	43	4
Total %				100				100				100				100



Clyne (2003) found that there was no complete correlation between low English language proficiency and low community language shift. However, for some groups such as Dutch, German and French speakers, a high English confidence rate was associated with a high language shift. For Turkish, Macedonian and German speakers, lack of confidence in English was an important factor in the low shift rate of community language but in the case of Italians in Australia, the relatively high rate of low English proficiency, along with a fairly high rate of language shift, contradicts the above trend. In the case of Vietnamese, there does not appear to be a language shift among the first immigrant generation, but in comparing English proficiency of the second-generation with home language shift, the correlation is less strong, (Clyne, 2003:37).

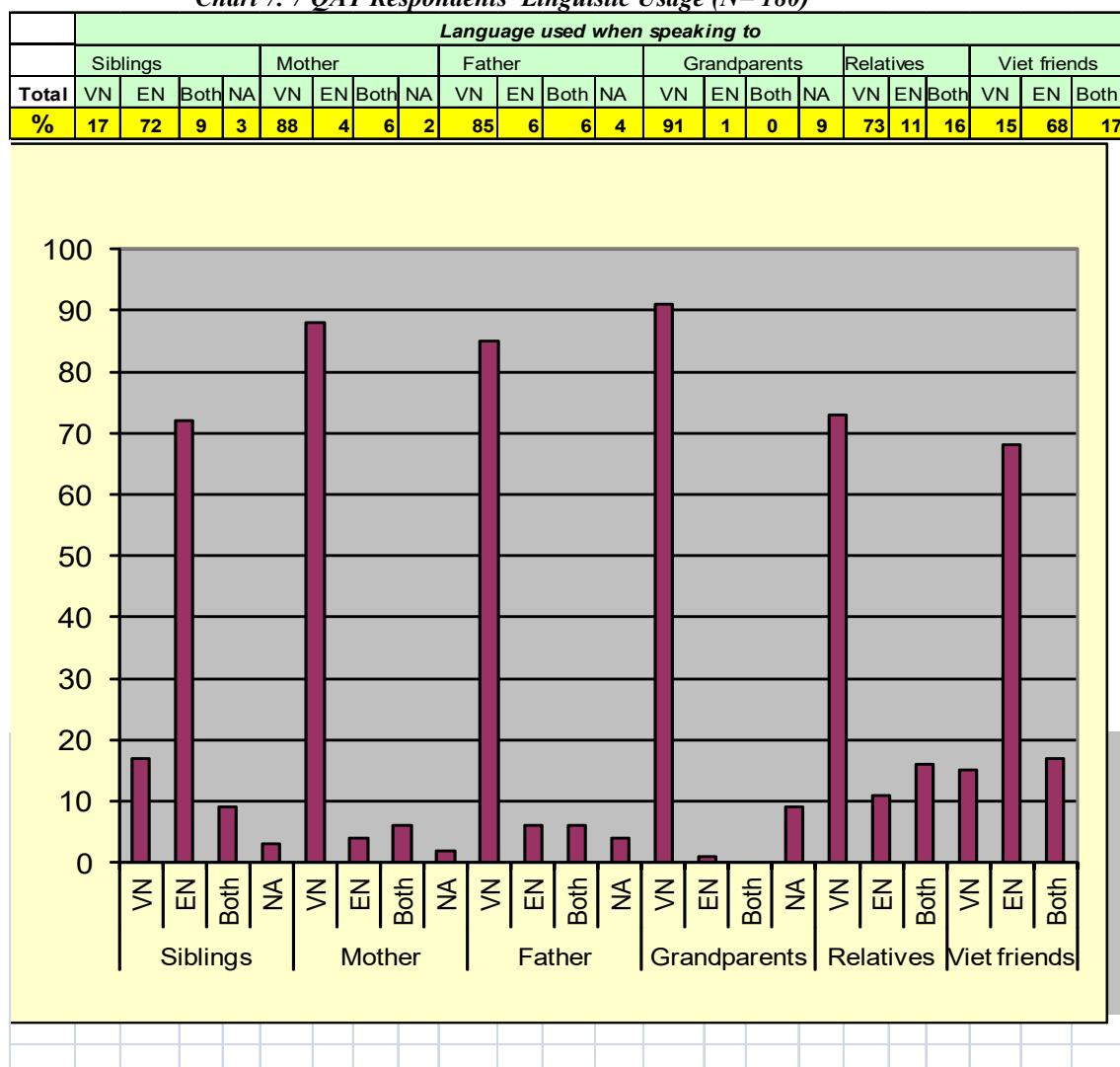
## ***Language Usage by Second Generation Participants***

### **With Parents and Grandparents**

As shown in *Chart 7.7* below, 91% of participants of QAY group stated that they spoke Vietnamese with their grandparents. These figures show that the second generation used Vietnamese extensively when they communicated with members of their extended family and particularly with their grandparents. This is a positive indicator for Vietnamese language maintenance and transmission in Australia.

All of the twenty-six memoir contributors in the QAY group stated that they always used Vietnamese to speak to their grandparents in Australia and in Vietnam. It should be noted that, in this instance, the participants had no choice but to use Vietnamese with this particular group of interlocutors, as almost all Vietnamese grandparents, at the time of this research, spoke English very little or not at all. Observation data also pointed to the fact that since the early 1990s when the family reunion scheme allowed many Vietnamese families to sponsor their elderly parents to Australia, children improved their Vietnamese language skills considerably because grandchildren had to learn how to communicate with their grandparents who usually lived in the same household or nearby. Thus, Vietnamese grandparents have been a catalyst in the reversal of language loss for many young Vietnamese families and an effective agent for Vietnamese language and culture transmission in Australia. This confirms the important roles that grandparents play in the maintenance and transmission of community language to their grandchildren, across all migrant communities, including the Vietnamese community as Clyne (1991, 2003, and 2005) stated in a number of his studies.



*Chart 7. 7 QAY Respondents' Linguistic Usage (N= 180)*

With regard to parents, *Chart 7.7* above shows that 88% of participants in the QAY group reported that they used Vietnamese when speaking to their mothers, 85% used Vietnamese when speaking to their fathers. All of the thirty adult memoir contributors in this study, and who have children in this QAY group, also reported that they used Vietnamese always when speaking to their children. These figures show a positive trend and commitment among Vietnamese parents to encourage their children to use Vietnamese only when they communicate with their parents. These figures also indicated that the rate that second generation used Vietnamese with their mothers was slightly stronger (3%) than with their fathers. From this evidence it could be deduced that Vietnamese women tended to use their community language more than men in the home with their children. However, Pauwels (1995) in a comparative study of language maintenance and shift among German, Greek and Vietnamese speakers in Melbourne found that women used their community language more than men in the Greek and German-speaking communities but the situation was reversed in the Vietnamese

community. Pauwels suggested that this could be related to the younger profile of the Vietnamese community, and their encouragement of bilingualism (Clyne, 2003: 36).

In relation to bilingualism in the Vietnamese community Clyne (1988, 1991, 2005) showed that it was possible for parents to raise their children bilingually, or in some cases trilingually. Evidence showed that many Vietnamese parents had successfully done so. The fact that all the students who completed SACE Stage 2 Vietnamese Continuers Level (Year 12) could speak both English and Vietnamese fluently demonstrated that their parents had successfully brought them up bilingually.

Clyne (1991, 2005) suggested that parents of mixed marriages should adopt the “*one parent one language strategy*” to transmit the languages of both parents to their children. This pattern was adopted frequently for German but in many cases without much success. Clyne (1991, 2005) claimed that for this method to be successful, it requires a great deal of consistency and sensitivity on the part of the parents; for instance, it requires the parent who does not speak the community language to avoid any feeling of exclusion, when the other parent speaks with their children in his/her own community language. Applying this theory to the Vietnamese situation, for example, if the father is Vietnamese-Australian and the mother is Chinese-Australian, the child could be encouraged to learn both Vietnamese and Chinese in school and the child would always speak Vietnamese to the father and Chinese to the mother at home. There were some cases where Chinese-Vietnamese couples (Oral memoirs Nos 29, 38) had succeeded in raising their children to become fluent trilingual (Chinese, Vietnamese and English).

## **With Siblings**

Numerous studies such as Fishman (1980, 1985, 1991) in the USA and Clyne (1991, 2003, 2005) in Australia, have reported near-universal mother-tongue attrition and shift to English among second generation ethnic groups in Australia and other countries. Smolicz (1971, 1976, 1979) and Smolicz and Secombe (1985, 1989) in a number of individual and joint studies in Australia, in the last few decades, have also shown a clear and consistent shift to English among children of various ethnic backgrounds. Second generation Vietnamese in Australia, and in France, appeared not to have avoided this phenomenon. *Chart 7.7* above shows that 72% of the participants used English when talking to their siblings. These figures show a clear shift to English among second generation Vietnamese when they had the choice between English and Vietnamese.

In the 2005 study, Clyne (2005: 68-69) found that Vietnamese had the lowest language shift rate (2.1%) in the first generation and a higher language shift in young adults. This could be attributed to a number of factors but the most influential one would be the tendency for young people of all or most groups to speak English to each other. However, Clyne (2005) reported that the shift to English among second generation Vietnamese aged 0-14 in the home domain was the lowest compared to other ethnic groups in Australia. This could be related to the fact that first generation Vietnamese parents pushed hard for their children to use Vietnamese at home. One could predict that eventually the shift to English among future generations of Vietnamese in Australia would be of a similar pattern to those of other ethnic groups which would be consistent with the findings of Clyne, Fishman, Smolicz and others. However, it should be noted that all the studies mentioned took place in the context of societies where English monolingualism predominated. In contrast, a number of Asian countries have a centuries' long tradition of linguistic pluralism, which may perhaps help to explain why Vietnamese, Chinese and Khmer are more frequently being maintained alongside English.

### **With Relatives and Vietnamese-Speaking Friends**

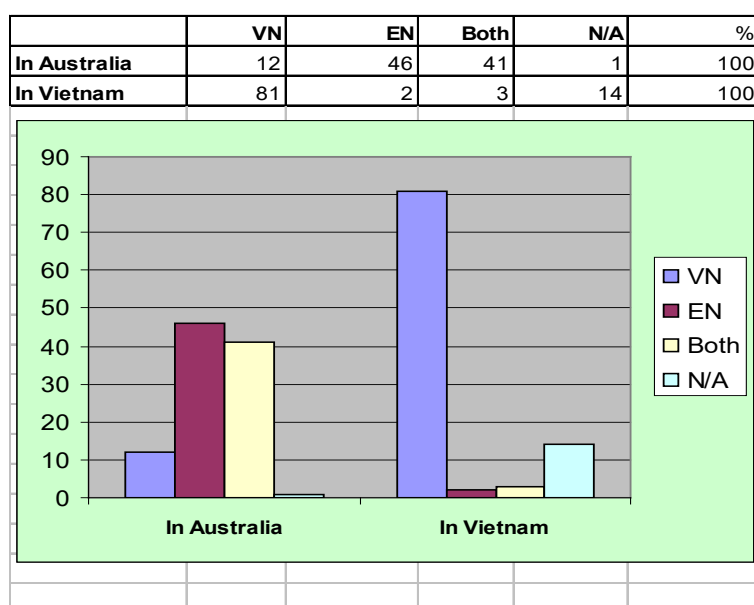
*Chart 7.7* shows that 73% of the QAY participants used Vietnamese when speaking to relatives who, it was assumed, were mainly older people forming the extended family circle and who spoke English very little or not at all. In this case, the participants had no choice but to use Vietnamese as the means of communication.

*Chart 7.7* also shows that 68% of participants used English when talking to their Vietnamese friends. Thus, the use of English among peer groups of friends was extensive. Their choice of English in this context was mainly due to the fact that there was no need for them to communicate with each other in Vietnamese and that their competence in English was higher than in Vietnamese and therefore, it was much easier for them to express abstract and complicated concepts in English than in Vietnamese. Only 17% of participants used both English and Vietnamese when communicating with their Vietnamese friends. This could either mean that the number of competent bilinguals among second generation Vietnamese was limited, or that English was their preferred language regardless of their level of competence in Vietnamese. There were 15% of the QAY participants who used Vietnamese when talking to their Vietnamese friends. These participants chose to use Vietnamese only, not because of their lack of English, but perhaps because they believed that they should use Vietnamese when talking to another

Vietnamese for cultural reasons or because they recognised the advantage of having a “secret” language which excluded the majority. It is more likely that this group belonged to the generation 1.5<sup>5</sup> than to the second generation. These results show an obvious shift to English among peer groups of the second generation. Although the rate of language shift among the Vietnamese (4.8% on 2001 Census data) was not as great as that of other ethnic groups such as the Dutch and the Italians, (Clyne 2005), the data from the QAY group on peer communication could be regarded as a warning sign.

As part of the questionnaire, the participants were asked to indicate what language they used when writing to or telephoning their relatives and friends in Australia (Q4.10) and in Vietnam (Q4.11). The results of their responses to these questions are presented in the following *Chart 7.8*. It was expected that the rate of using Vietnamese by the participants to write to or telephone relatives and friends in Vietnam would be much higher than in Australia (81% and 12% respectively), since Vietnamese is the national language of Vietnam and English is the main language in Australia. However, it was noted that the proportion of those using both English and Vietnamese to write or telephone their relatives and friends in Australia was almost equal to those using English only (41% and 46%, respectively).

**Chart 7.8 Writing or Telephoning Vietnamese Relatives and Friends, QAY group (N = 180)**



It seems that bilingualism among second generation manifested itself more clearly when there was no opportunity for them to choose between English or Vietnamese, as in the case when they communicated with speakers of Vietnamese only in Vietnam or in Australia. It should be noted that there was a small number of participants (14%) who

<sup>5</sup> Those who came to Australia from Vietnam relatively young but after the age of twelve.

had never written or telephoned any of their relatives or friends in Vietnam either because they did not know how to, or they didn't have any.

## ***Participants' Experiences of Studying Vietnamese***

### **Schools Where Participants Studied Vietnamese**

A high majority of participants (86%) in the QAY group reported that they were studying Vietnamese at the time. As shown in *Table 7.5* below, participants were studying Vietnamese in eleven different schools, belonging to all three systems of education in South Australia: three Catholic schools, namely Christian Brothers' College, Thomas More College, Our Lady of Sacred Heart College; three state schools, namely Woodville High, Enfield High, Ross Smith High and five ethnic schools, namely Bo De School, Dac Lo School, Lac Long School, St Mary's Vietnamese School and the Vietnamese Community Ethnic School.

*Table 7. 5 Schools Where QAY Participants Studied Vietnamese (N= 180)*

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Bo De Ethnic School	2	1
Christian Brothers' College	19	12
Dac Lo Ethnic School	5	3
Enfield High School	2	1
Lac Long Ethnic School	34	22
Our Lady of Sacred Heart College	5	3
Ross Smith High School	2	1
St Mary's Vietnamese School	41	26
Thomas More College	24	15
Vietnamese Community School	11	7
Woodville High School	8	5
Not Stated	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>100</b>

It was noted that the majority of students came from ethnic schools (60%) and the highest proportion (26%) came from St Mary's Vietnamese School as this school had been specialising in teaching Vietnamese at secondary level, with a special focus on preparing students for SACE Stage One and Two (equivalent to Year 11 and Year 12) since 1979, whereas other Vietnamese ethnic schools have been concentrating on teaching Vietnamese primary programs. All twenty-six memoir respondents reported that they studied Vietnamese throughout their primary and secondary schooling years and most of them studied the language through three or four different Vietnamese ethnic schools during those years.

*My learning the language was not by force but an undirected and spontaneous approach. Throughout most of my primary schooling, I attended Vietnamese classes at St Brigid's and as I reached high school, was enrolled at Pennington for a year. Furthermore, I went to St Mary's and Woodville Vietnamese School. Through these experiences, I have a bit of an idea of how capable I am of learning Vietnamese. (W. Memoir 6, Y 12 student, born in Australia)*

*I began Vietnamese at Reception and slowly made it to grade 3. Later I moved to Lac Long School to complete grades 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8; coming first every year, followed by the Vietnamese Community School at Croydon High for year 9. I hadn't progressed much in that year, so I changed once again. Since last year I learnt Vietnamese at St Mary's Vietnamese School and I am still continuing my Stage 2 Vietnamese there.*

*(W. Memoir 3, Y 10 student, born in Australia)*

As discussed previously in Chapter 5, in South Australia and also Australia wide, Vietnamese ethnic schools have played a vital role in providing language education to students of Vietnamese background for decades since the early 1980s (see Chapter 5). These Vietnamese ethnic schools are organised by community organisations and groups on a voluntary basis. It appears that Vietnamese ethnic schools have been the most important agent and effective means for the Vietnamese language and culture maintenance, particularly in relation to reading and writing skills in Australia so far.

## **Evaluation of Vietnamese Learning Experiences**

All memoir contributors whose cultural data were used for the analysis of this chapter had studied Vietnamese through the ethnic school system up to Year 11 or Year 12 and many of them had started to learn Vietnamese from Reception. Almost all memoir contributors and the majority of those who responded to the questionnaire evaluated their experience of studying Vietnamese positively, with only two participants reporting their experience in negative terms.

***Positive experiences.*** Learning Vietnamese was for many participants a memorable experience in their lives as expressed in the following memoirs.

*Ever since the day I set foot on the Australian soil, I have been attending various Vietnamese schools, under the intention to uphold my knowledge about my culture and tradition... Until now, it has been approximately ten beautiful years of which each year was accompanied with great experiences from Vietnamese school. For these past years I have been excessively studying and communicating in English in order to adapt and improve. Vietnamese has not become a faint memory. I find myself very talented in Vietnamese.*

*(W. Memoir 14, Y 12 student, born in Vietnam)*

This memoir writer came to Australia with his parents when he was very young. As reported in his memoir, as soon as he arrived in Australia his parents sent him to the

Vietnamese school and during a period of “ten beautiful years” of studying Vietnamese he attended three different Vietnamese ethnic schools where “each year was accompanied with great experiences”. He studied year 12 Vietnamese as a SACE Stage 2 subject and obtained very good results in his final SSABSA examination. His oral and written skills in Vietnamese were equally good. He spoke Vietnamese with ease and with a native accent. He was one of those students who could be classified as a competent bilingual.

Many memoir respondents who had been born in Australia also reported that they had studied Vietnamese from Reception to Year 12 and that they thoroughly enjoyed their learning experience and took pride in their achievement.

*I have enjoyed learning Vietnamese very much and I am proud of it. I used to see learning Vietnamese as a chore; however, today I appreciate the fact that my parents encouraged me to study Vietnamese. They no longer ask of me to learn Vietnamese; however, it is what I want to do.*

*(W. Memoir 2, Y 11 student, born in Australia)*

This memoir writer was born in Australia to a young couple who were committed to raising their children bilingually. He was their eldest son who was 16 years old in 2005. Memoir writer 2 explained that he did not always enjoy learning Vietnamese but because of his parents’ encouragement and support he was able to persevere and later on he really enjoyed and appreciated the benefits of his learning. His Vietnamese oral and written skills were outstanding. He spoke Vietnamese fluently with a wide range of vocabulary and discourse registers. Although he was only in Year 11 in his mainstream school program at the time, he was allowed to enrol in the Year 12 Vietnamese program and achieved a very high score for Vietnamese in his SSABSA final result which placed him in the second position among all those who sat for the Vietnamese SSABSA examination in South Australia that year. Memoir writer 2 was indeed a very competent bilingual. These two cases clearly proved that Vietnamese parents can successfully raise their children to become competent bilinguals in Australia. Both of these students studied Vietnamese through ethnic schools. Thus, Vietnamese ethnic schools have become one of the effective means helping parents to achieve these linguistic aims for their children. Many memoir contributors, including those with limited Vietnamese language skills, recognised the advantages of studying Vietnamese. They saw Vietnamese as a subject that brought them many academic, cultural and social benefits, such as meeting friends and improving their English skills as well.

*Meeting friends.* One of the motivations for students to attend Vietnamese classes in ethnic schools, which were held after school hours or on weekends, was because they provided a good environment for students to meet other Vietnamese students. In this way, they established close networks of friends beyond the boundary of their mainstream school friends. This was reflected in the following memoir by a student who studied Vietnamese through a Vietnamese ethnic school.

*I now do Vietnamese on Friday nights at school x in which I have learnt to enjoy and have made some great friends. I still take Vietnamese lessons every Friday, which I don't see as something, my parents force me to do, but I see it as my own choice to keep my background and culture alive. (W. Memoir 11, Y 11 student, born in Australia)*

This student was studying Vietnamese at SACE Stage 2, Continuers Level through an ethnic school. Every Friday, after school, she and five of her friends had to rush from their day school in the North-Eastern suburbs to a Vietnamese school in the City of Adelaide to be on time for the Vietnamese lesson at 4.30pm. When the lesson finished at 7pm, they went home together in her parents' car. Although it was a long distance and great effort for them to travel to the Vietnamese School every Friday, they never missed a lesson for the whole year and they seemed to thoroughly enjoy coming to the Vietnamese lessons because of the close friendship network that they had established in the Vietnamese School. It was noted that such friendship groups usually extended beyond Year 12, into their university time and many years after. Such friendship networks have undoubtedly helped to motivate students to study Vietnamese, and consequently they act as a positive agent for language maintenance among young Vietnamese-Australians.

*Improving English.* There were a few students who mentioned in their memoirs that studying Vietnamese was also helping them to improve their English skills. As with other language syllabuses, there was an English component of about 30% in the South Australian Year 12 Vietnamese syllabus at the time. Therefore, in order to achieve good marks in Vietnamese, students had to be good at both English and Vietnamese. The following extract from a memoir clearly expressed the benefit of improving English through studying Vietnamese.

*From this subject (Vietnamese) I knew more about Australia and deeply about Vietnam. In addition, I could study and practice English because there were many Vietnamese-Australian students (they all were born or came to Australia as a young child) who talked Vietnamese not much but English so much. If I had questions about English or Australian things, they were prepared to help me whereas if they had questions about Vietnamese things, I would also try to help them besides the teacher. (W. Memoir 16, Year 12 Overseas student)*



The above extract of memoir was written by an overseas student who had been in Australia for only two years and was studying the Vietnamese SACE Stage 2, Background Speakers course at the time. This course was designed for those who had studied Vietnamese in Vietnam for more than one year before they came to Australia. This student had completed Year 10 in Vietnam before he came here as an overseas student. As there were not enough students to form a separate Background Speakers class, this student was put in a combined class with fourteen other students enrolled in Vietnamese SACE Stage 2, Continuers Level, a course designed for those who were born in Australia. It was obvious by his memoir that he was very competent in Vietnamese but he struggled with English and lacked knowledge on Australian current issues. Through the Vietnamese lessons, he was able to get help from other students with English and gain knowledge about Australia. He, in turn, was able to help other students with the Vietnamese language and issues related to Vietnam. Mixed ability groupings have become very common in Vietnamese language classes. Some teachers found this teaching situation challenging, but others were able to use the situation to the benefit of all the students. Students helped each other to learn both Vietnamese and English, through mutual support, real partnerships and genuine friendships with one another. When this happened, students were keen to learn the language. As a teacher of combined Year 12 Vietnamese classes, the researcher has discovered this method of teaching to be exciting and most effective.

**Negative experiences.** Among the twenty-six memoir respondents there were only two (Nos 4 and 7) who evaluated their experience of learning Vietnamese negatively. However, in both of these cases, the negativity was not directly related to their learning experience at school, but to their experience of learning Vietnamese at home with parents.

*I remember my first few years of trying to learn my native language, what a laugh! Naturally mum and dad did not want me to "lose touch" with my roots, so it was compulsory for me to learn reading, writing and speech skills. For the first few years, I distinctly remember that I was four years old when I started, mum home schooled me for a year, and because she used to be a teacher in Vietnam she knew what to teach me. It was absolutely dreadful!*

*(W. Memoir 7, Y 12 student, born in Thailand)*

This memoir writer recalled her experience of learning Vietnamese at home with her mother when she was only four years old as "absolutely dreadful!", because being a former teacher in Vietnam, her mother had applied very strict discipline as the method of

teaching. If the child did not learn what was required of her, she would be severely punished:

*Till this very day, I have not forgotten this price I paid for those skills, if I couldn't read the words mum had taught me, then she would handle me the "just" way according to the Vietnamese, I would receive a whack on the arm and very severe scolding. Several times dad tried to save me, but in the end, all he could do was watch me accept those painful blows, and continue my reading until I succeeded. (W. Memoir 7, Y 12 student, born in Thailand)*

This is not a good way of introducing the language to a child, because the child then associates the Vietnamese language with her painful childhood experiences. This kind of experience could turn children away from the language completely. However, this particular student got over the experience and continued to study Vietnamese successfully up to Year 12. Her written and oral skills in Vietnamese were assessed by her teacher at the end of her Year 12 as excellent.

The common pattern for many Vietnamese students has been to start Vietnamese school at Reception or Year One and to continue the program regularly during their primary school years. However, during their high school years, they often stopped and started, or jumped classes. This disruptive way of learning Vietnamese worked for some students, but the majority found it extremely difficult to catch up with the program of learning, as reflected by memoir writer No 4 in the following.

*I've been learning Vietnamese for a while now. I started learning it when I was in year one. I found the work back then relatively easy, but when I stopped going to regular Vietnamese school and going into a year 8 Vietnamese class when I was in year 6 in my normal school, was when the work became too hard for me. Learning Vietnamese has been hard for me. Being not particularly good at it, as well as not choosing to learn it, has made it particularly difficult for me. Juggling Vietnamese along with seven other subjects makes it hard for me to put enough effort into my work, but I still try my best in doing what I can.*

*(W. Memoir 4, Y 11 student, born in Australia)*

This memoir writer 4 did not want to study Vietnamese but because of the pressure from her father who was a teacher of Vietnamese, she unwillingly enrolled in Year 11, then Year 12 the following year. She struggled with the program and did not pass the Year 12 Vietnamese SSABSA examination. In her memoir, she recognised that she was not very successful in this subject for two reasons: first, Vietnamese was not the subject of her own choice; second, Vietnamese was added to her already heavy academic program in the mainstream school. Consequently, she could not devote enough time or effort to the Vietnamese subject. The observational data from the researcher's experience, as a teacher of Vietnamese at senior secondary and tertiary levels for many years, confirmed

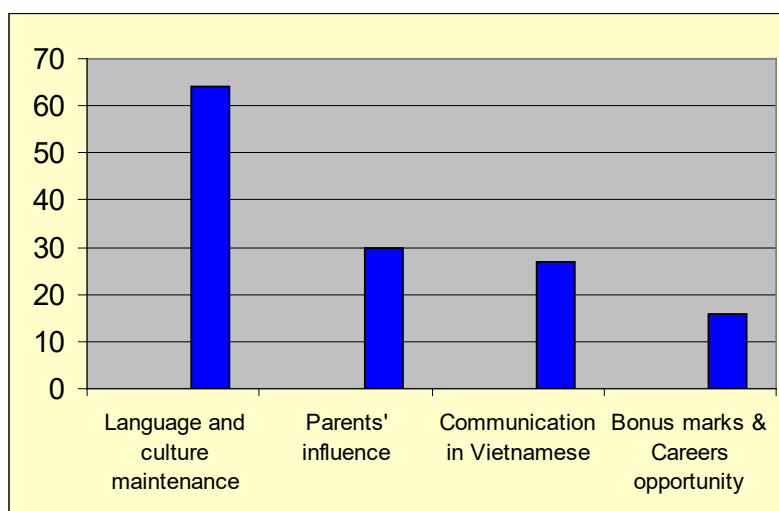
that the situation of memoir writer 4 was relatively common among students of second generation and it raised the question of the effectiveness of parents' forceful influence on children in relation to their academic subject choices and also the question of mainstreaming the Vietnamese subject so that students could study Vietnamese at their own school, as one of the subjects in students' normal academic program. It must be pointed out that in South Australia, students enrolled in Vietnamese or any language subject through an ethnic school can have it counted towards their SACE certificate at Year 11 or Year 12 level. Consequently, they could request their mainstream school to reduce their normal academic program of one subject. However, memoir writer 4 had not done so, and ended up having to cope with an extra heavy load of subjects.

Vietnamese parents realised that they had to encourage or even force their children to start learning Vietnamese at a very early age; otherwise, they would miss out and never want to go to the Vietnamese school when they get older, as in the case of memoir writers 4 and 7 above. These parents, who were former teachers in Vietnam or currently teaching Vietnamese in Australia, were more often concerned for their children to learn Vietnamese than those from other professions. In contrast to the above two cases, the majority of students greatly valued their experience of learning Vietnamese and also spoke highly of their teachers.

### ***Reasons for Studying Vietnamese***

Respondents in the QAY group were asked in the questionnaire to give two reasons why they did or did not choose to study Vietnamese and their responses to this particular question were collated. The statistical analysis of responses showed interesting results when they were classified in four different categories in order of priority: 1) for language and culture maintenance 2) parents' influence 3) for communication purposes and 4) for bonus marks and career opportunities in the future as shown in *Chart 7.9* below.

**Chart 7. 9 Reasons for Studying Vietnamese in Percentage, QAY group (N = 180)**



**1) Maintain Vietnamese Language and Culture.** The results of Chart 7.9 show that almost two thirds respondents of the QAY group reported that they chose to study Vietnamese because they wanted to maintain the language and culture or wanted to know about the country, the land of their origin. This was also reported as the most important reason by many memoir respondents who chose to study Vietnamese, as it was reflected in the following extracts from their comments.

*My experience of learning Vietnamese is a bonus for me because it gives me the opportunity to learn more about our culture and language. Being a Vietnamese-Australian I want to learn and go into depth with the language that my parents and grandparents have endured throughout their lives.*

*(W. Memoir 12, Y 12 student, born in Australia)*

*...the real reason behind studying Vietnamese would be to secure as well as to value my language and culture, which I know for a certainty, my parents and family would want, since sadly these days, more and more Vietnamese young people are failing to comprehend this.* (W. Memoir 5, Y 11 student, born in Australia)

**2) Parents' influence.** About a third of the respondents among the group stated that the main reason for them to study Vietnamese was simply the influence of their parents. Many were forced by their parents; some were encouraged by their parents and some just studied Vietnamese to please their parents. When they were young, they usually obeyed their parents without questioning even when they could not understand the reasons for which their parents wanted them to learn the language.

*I used to be unsure of why my parents forced me to learn Vietnamese but over ten years of constantly studying Vietnamese, I have grown to realise the reasons why my parents compelled me to it. I now see that learning Vietnamese is not only an advantage to me academically, but also has other benefits in my life. For example, in helping others like Vietnamese people who can't speak English and having better opportunities in career paths.*

*(W. Memoir 5, Y 11 student, born in Australia)*

Almost all the memoir respondents reported that they started to learn Vietnamese at Reception or Year One, not by their own choice, but by their parents' desire for them to learn the language. Some memoir writers recalled these early experiences negatively (3,7,11) but the majority of them were grateful for their parents' insistence not to let them drop the subject, as reported in the following memoir extract.

*My experience of learning Vietnamese began in the home, as most things do. I was quick to learn the sounds but had great difficulty in forming sentences. I constantly complained and asked questions such as "Why do I have to learn Vietnamese on Saturday, when other children are out enjoying themselves?" My parents simply replied, "You will be able to write letters to your grandparents". I persisted to fire more questions: "Why do I have to write letters to them for?" At that stage my parents burst into laughter, and it was left as that. I absolutely hated Vietnamese school, but my parents have been able to change that... Personally, Vietnamese has been a great contributor to my life. I become more proud of my character and nationality as I understand it better.*

*(W. Memoir 3, Y 10 student, born in Australia)*

This memoir writer 3 is an example of a successful case where parents took great care and effort to guide their child in her Vietnamese language education. As this participant was two years ahead in her Vietnamese language program, she was allowed to enrol in SACE Stage 2 Vietnamese, Continuers level through an ethnic school and sat for the SSABSA examination at the end of year with excellent results for Vietnamese, and yet she was only in Year 10 in her mainstream school at the time. Her knowledge of Vietnamese language and culture was far beyond the level of students of her own age-group. She was gifted with languages and music. Part of her success in Vietnamese was probably due to her parents' guidance, determination, perseverance and constant support for her during all those years, as she herself acknowledged it in her memoir. Vietnamese parents usually place high value on education for their children. Like other migrant groups, Vietnamese parents see education as the most direct way for their children to have a future in Australia. Thus, they often exercise a strong influence on their children's choice of subjects or university courses which would lead them successfully to certain career paths. There have been many success stories in the Vietnamese community, showing how parents could have a direct influence on their children's educational choice. However, there has also been evidence of the damaging effects on children's lives, caused by pressure that parents put on their children. Vietnamese parents' expectations are sometimes unreasonable and unrealistic.

With regard to Vietnamese language education, many Vietnamese have adopted the policy of enrolling their children in a Vietnamese school as soon as they start

Kindergarten or Reception regardless of their children's desire to learn the language. Usually parents would have no difficulty in getting their children to go to Vietnamese school on Saturdays or Sundays when they are in primary or lower secondary. Students often stop going to Vietnamese school around Year 8 or Year 9, when they find other interests, such as playing sport or going out with friends, more attractive than learning Vietnamese. However, many students later came back to complete Year 11 or Year 12 as a SACE subject, as reflected in the following memoir 10.

*I started to learn Vietnamese from Reception to Year nine then I stopped doing Vietnamese in year ten and eleven, but now am currently learning Vietnamese again. I didn't have a choice either to learn Vietnamese or not, I was forced by my parents until year nine. (W. Memoir 10, Y 12 student, born in Australia)*

This particular student did not achieve good Year 12 Vietnamese results due to the gap of two years not studying Vietnamese in Years 10 and 11. It is very important for any subject and especially for language subjects that students undertake their studies consistently. The parents of this particular student expressed regret that they had not insisted on their son continuing to learn Vietnamese throughout his high school years.

Learning Vietnamese as soon as a child starts school is seriously considered by many Vietnamese parents as a logical step for a child to continue the process of language development already started at home. Young children often did not see the benefits or the reasons for which their parents wanted them to learn Vietnamese but when they became older, or in the case of these respondents, when they reached Year twelve level, they were thankful to their parents for making this choice for them.

**3) Communication in Vietnamese.** Over one quarter of the respondents reported that they studied Vietnamese for communication purposes which meant that, with the Vietnamese skills they learned, they could communicate well with members of their extended families, with Vietnamese people in Australia, as well as those in Vietnam. Some saw that learning Vietnamese had widened their thinking and equipped them with appropriate language skills so that they could help Vietnamese people as interpreters, an idea reflected in the following memoir.

*Learning another language has opened my opportunities and helped me to be able to think outside the square I live in. For example: when I go to Vietnam as a tourist, I am able to interact with many people and be able to translate for the other tourists who are foreign to the language.*

*(W. Memoir 9, Y 11 student, born in Australia)*

**4) Marks and Career Opportunity.** Less than a fifth of the participants stated that they studied Vietnamese with the aim of getting good marks for university entrance or in

the hope that Vietnamese studies would open for them a good career opportunity in the future, as expressed in memoirs 10 and 14.

*The main reason I am doing Vietnamese is to learn how to read and write in Vietnamese better and it might come in handy in the future and that you can get two bonus points towards your TER score.*

*(W. Memoir 10, Y 12 student, born in Australia)*

*There are many factors which contribute to my on-going interest in learning Vietnamese. Undoubtedly, the language itself will help enhance my future career path. With an extra language in my resume, I will be more likely to get into my desired occupation. (W. Memoir 14, Y 12 student, born in Vietnam)*

This view has changed considerably over the years. In the 1980's and 1990's almost all students who enrolled in Vietnamese at Year 12 level or even university level, did so because it was an easy option for them to obtain good marks. The student cohorts at the time were mainly new arrivals from Vietnam and their competence in Vietnamese was already at a very high level. In more recent years Vietnamese has no longer been considered as an easy subject; on the contrary, it has become a very challenging subject and it is difficult for second generation Vietnamese students or even overseas Vietnamese students to succeed well. Many students do not continue their study at Year 12 level for fear of not passing the subject well.

*I joined in a Vietnamese class to study Vietnamese as a Stage 2 subject at St Mary's Vietnamese School. I decided to do it because I thought it is easier to get high marks for this subject. But I was wrong, it was not really easy as I thought even though I lived in Vietnam and studied there for 17 years. It is because we studied not only Vietnamese things but also Australian things which were about tourism, environment, society, etc. That is why I have not felt bored when I have Vietnamese lesson so far. (W. Memoir 16, Y 12 overseas student)*

Thus, at present most Vietnamese parents and students do not see Vietnamese as a subject which will automatically lead to a career path in Australia but rather think that it could become an added advantage when the children return to Vietnam to visit relatives or to work there. It is also seen as a good choice of subject to gain some bonus points to get into Adelaide university courses of their choice. Not many parents or students would consider that studying Vietnamese could enhance achievement in other academic subjects. However, a number of studies in France (Le Huu Khoa, 1985; Kiet Le, 1997) and to a lesser extent in Australia (Tran thi Nien, 1993; Ninnes, 1995) have demonstrated that students who achieved well in the Vietnamese subject also did well in English and other subjects. Thus, studying Vietnamese could, in fact, be seen as helping students to achieve well academically.

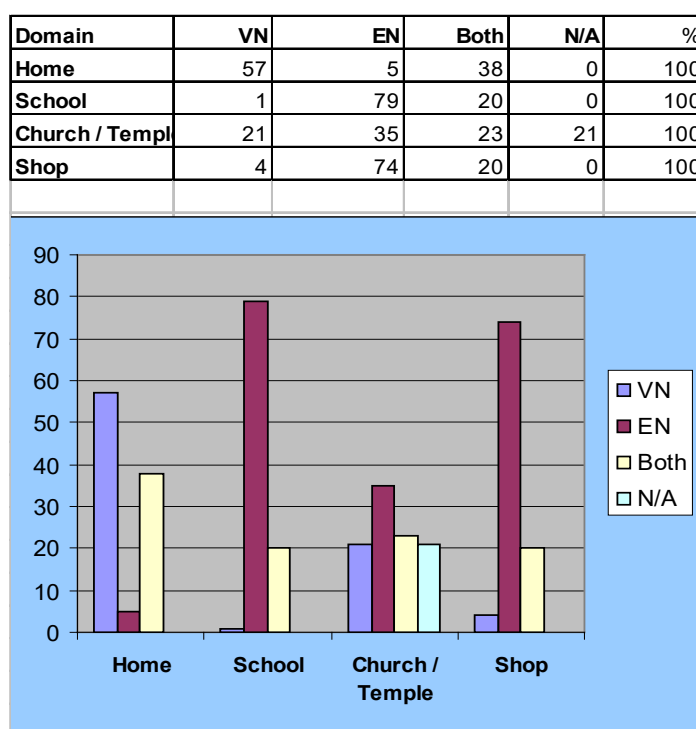
## ***Factors Affecting Language Transmission and Development***

Fishman (1980, 1991, 2001), Clyne (1991, 2005) and other specialists in the field of language maintenance, have identified a number of factors which can have a direct influence on language maintenance and transmission among migrant communities. In this context, five major factors, in the form of specific social domains, have been chosen to be examined in detail.

- home or family environment
- schools
- friendship networks or peer groups
- ethnic organisations such as church or temple
- places of employment

In the section that follows, each of the above domains is considered against the cultural data from memoirs and statistical data related to participants' linguistic usage in various contexts as revealed in *Chart 7.10* below.

***Chart 7.10 Domains of Linguistic Usage in Percentage, QAY group (N=180)***



### **Home and Family Environment**

The domain where Vietnamese language is most frequently used is the home or family gatherings. Twenty years ago, Vietnamese was the only language one could hear in the Vietnamese households, but now the situation has changed with members made up of second generation members. *Chart 7.10* shows that 57% of participants in the QAY group reported that they used Vietnamese at home, 38% used both English and Vietnamese and



5% used only English at home. Many memoir contributors reported that they used only Vietnamese at home, because this was the language in which they felt most comfortable expressing themselves.

*At home, I speak only in Vietnamese because I believe that when I'm home I feel safe, comfortable and that I can truly express myself. Though my brother and I often exchange a few English conversations, we both find that Vietnamese is still the main language spoken at home. When we have family gatherings, Vietnamese is used across each individual in the family. We feel that it is important to speak in Vietnamese during these times because it is our traditional gatherings. (W. Memoir 14, Y 12 student, born in Vietnam)*

This participant was very competent in English, but he chose to speak Vietnamese at home, even with his brother, because he believed that it was important for them to use their mother tongue at home.

Speaking Vietnamese with parents and grandparents but English with their siblings was the most common pattern of language usage among respondents of second generation.

*At home, I spoke only Vietnamese to my parents. However, I spoke English to my brother and sister. (W. Memoir 11, Y 11 student, born in Australia)*

Thus, the Vietnamese language was still extensively used at home by all memoir and questionnaire respondents. It was well maintained in the home domain by both first and second generations. It has become an accepted principle among Vietnamese parents that they only speak Vietnamese at home with their children with the aim of helping them to maintain their language and culture. However, many parents now have to use both English and Vietnamese to their children because of their children's lack of Vietnamese vocabulary. This situation tends to happen more frequently with the younger group of parents, those who are well educated and can speak English well. If this group of parents are not careful, their children will eventually speak English only at home and consequently, they will lose the ability to speak Vietnamese completely. In order to avoid language shift, Clyne (2005) suggested that parents use the community language, in this case Vietnamese, always in talking to their children at home. Even when the child responds in English, the parents should persevere in continuing the conversation in the community language.

***Vietnamese extended family lifestyle.*** The Vietnamese extended family lifestyle can also help children to maintain the Vietnamese language and Vietnamese cultural traditions. Many Vietnamese families have been able to establish contact patterns with other members of their extended family through family gatherings. Once a week, for example,

all children, married or single, gather at their parents' home on Saturdays or Sundays for a meal and to share family stories or family celebrations in the Vietnamese tradition. Many parents have made it a priority for their children to participate in family events such as weddings, funerals, anniversaries, and festival celebrations. In this way, children have the opportunity to speak Vietnamese with other Vietnamese people and have an authentic personal experience of Vietnamese cultural traditions in a meaningful way. Many memoir respondents believed that it was most important for the Vietnamese language to be used during these occasions.

*When we have family gatherings, Vietnamese is used across each individual in the family. We feel that it is important to speak in Vietnamese during these times because it is our traditional gatherings. (W. Memoir 14, Y 12 student, born in Vietnam)*

Each of the 180 participants has given a very positive evaluation of Vietnamese family relationships and values. All QAY memoir respondents have expressed the desire to maintain Vietnamese family traditions in Australia. Family is the most effective environment in which parents can help their children to learn and to live the Vietnamese cultural traditions. It is only when the children are sure of their cultural identity, are proud of their cultural heritage that they can succeed and live with confidence as a Vietnamese-Australian in society. The evidence of the memoir writers shows that many Vietnamese parents have been able to achieve this.

## **Schools**

School is the domain where students meet Vietnamese friends more regularly but only 2% of the participants in the QAY group reported that they used Vietnamese in school; a very high percentage (79%) used English only and 20% used both English and Vietnamese in the school environment. This is understandable because English is the language of instruction in Australian mainstream schools. All the memoir respondents revealed a similar pattern of language use in the school context, as reflected in the following memoir.

*...the moment I step into my mainstream school, I find myself including all my friends, beginning to speak in English throughout the whole day, week, and year. The reason being, none of my friends can speak Vietnamese as fluent as I can and that they feel comfortable in speaking in English.*

*(W. Memoir 14, Y 12 student, born in Vietnam)*

Classroom observations over the last ten years have also shown that students in Vietnamese classes have increasingly used English to communicate with one another in class and in the school yard. Fifteen or twenty years ago, the language that students used

in class and in the school yard among themselves was mainly Vietnamese because this group of students came to Australia when their Vietnamese linguistic ability had already reached its full development. While teaching Vietnamese, the researcher has been trying to encourage students to use only Vietnamese during the lessons, but students find it most difficult to keep this rule. When students do not have the required vocabulary or knowledge of Vietnamese grammatical structures and styles to express themselves in Vietnamese, they automatically switch to English. This kind of shift to English among second generation Vietnamese is already evident.

### **Friendship Networks or Peer Groups**

There was no clear evidence to support the positive influence of friendship networks on the participants' language maintenance. Observation data indicated that when the participants were among their Vietnamese friends or peer groups they usually spoke English instead of Vietnamese. However, peer groups were seen to exercise a powerful influence on their members with regard to language maintenance attitudes and their choice of the language subject in school. A few participants reported that they came back to study Vietnamese as a SACE subject because of the influence of their friends who were studying Vietnamese at the time. Peer groups or friendship networks alone can exercise a powerful positive or negative influence in the process of developing language and culture during the formative years of second generation Vietnamese in Australia.

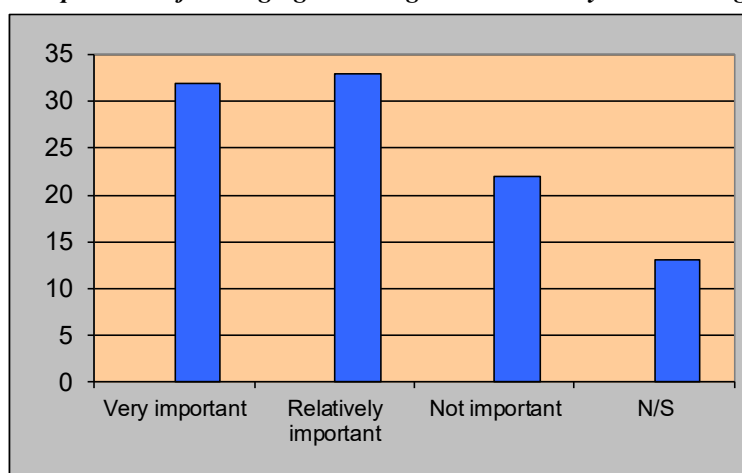
### **Church or Temple**

The two religious communities in South Australia which have played a significant role in the maintenance of Vietnamese language and culture in the lives of the participants were the Vietnamese Catholic community at Pooraka, with approximately 3000 members at the time and the Vietnamese Buddhist community with its temple at Pennington. Vietnamese people with Buddhist affiliation occupy about 38% (2001 Census) of the Vietnamese-Australian population, but the number of practising Buddhists is relatively small. Nevertheless, both of these communities have a high number of young people attending their religious services, compared to Australian church attendance. There were approximately two hundred young people aged 1-25 attending Sunday Mass each week at the Vietnamese Catholic Community Centre at Pooraka at the time of this research. Church and Temple can provide a good opportunity for second generation to mix with

their peer groups and older Vietnamese people to practise their religious faith in a culturally appropriate environment and to practise Vietnamese as well.

However, the results of this research have not shown a promising picture that church or temple will really help future generation Vietnamese to maintain their language and culture. Over a third of participants in the QAY group reported that they did not belong to any religious community, even though the parents of many in this group were regular church attendees. Through her involvement with the Vietnamese Catholic community at Pooraka, for many years since the establishment of this community in 1976, the researcher noted that second generation Vietnamese differed greatly from their parents in their attitudes to religion and the importance of religion in their lives. This attitude was also revealed clearly through their responses to question Q5.2 of the questionnaire: “In your opinion, is it important for you to belong to that religious community?” as shown in the following *Chart 7.11*.

***Chart 7. 11 Importance of Belonging to a Religious Community in Percentage, QAY group (N=180)***



Although 63% of participants in the QAY group stated that they belonged to a religious community namely Catholic, *Chart 7.11* shows that only one third of the QAY group thought it was very important for them to belong to a religious community and a quarter considered it not important at all. This could be explained by the fact that many participants went to church not by their own choice, or because of the importance of religion in their lives, but because of their parents. Results of their responses to question 5.2 (iv) of the questionnaire: “Do you think that the activities of your religious community has helped you to maintain the Vietnamese language?” show that 56% of participants in the QAY group thought that by participating in church activities they were strengthening the maintenance of the Vietnamese language. Those who responded positively gave reasons such as: people speak Vietnamese all the time there so it was a

good opportunity for them to learn new words and to practise Vietnamese. However, for those who went to the Vietnamese church regularly, only 21% of them reported that they spoke only Vietnamese in this context, whereas 35% spoke English only and 21% used both English and Vietnamese. A number of the participants said that the service conducted in Vietnamese was boring and too long and that they could not understand the language used in the sermons so most of the time they spoke English among themselves.

Cultural facts also show very low level of connection between religion and language maintenance. A religion such as Christianity is not considered as a core value of the Vietnamese culture by the Vietnamese people in general. However, the Catholic faith is very important for the Vietnamese Catholics in Vietnam and in the host countries. Vietnamese people tend to adopt a flexible and tolerant attitude towards a variety of religious beliefs and practices. This has perhaps been influenced by mainstream Australian attitudes to religion where freedom of religious belief and practice is accepted, and the recent tendency is toward secularism and no religious belief (Smolicz, Hudson, Secombe, Koniecko and Nical, 2010).

Both the Catholic community and the Buddhist community in South Australia have their own Vietnamese ethnic schools which operate on Saturdays and Sundays. Dac Lo Ethnic School belonging to the Vietnamese Catholic Community has the largest number of students of all Vietnamese ethnic schools in South Australia at present. Both of these communities have always conducted their religious services and other cultural, educational and social welfare activities in Vietnamese. It is believed by many parents and community leaders that this is one of the ways through which Vietnamese language and culture can be maintained and transmitted to future generation Vietnamese-Australians, but the attitudes of a number of young people, such as some of the QAY memoir writers do not support this view.

### **Places of Employment**

It is logical to think that a working environment where Vietnamese language is used constantly, such as Vietnamese shops, chemists, restaurants or doctors' surgeries would create a favourable environment for nurturing Vietnamese language and culture. Although Vietnamese language is used all the time in these public places, it does not seem to have a direct positive influence on language maintenance for second generation Vietnamese. *Chart 7.10* above shows only 4% of participants reported that they used Vietnamese in the "shop" domain and 20% used both English and Vietnamese in the

same context. This was the second lowest rate of Vietnamese usage by the participants, in all domains where Vietnamese language could be used in Australia, mainly because very few second generation Vietnamese would go to these places regularly. People who go to these Vietnamese shops, restaurants and doctor surgeries regularly were first generation Vietnamese. However, observations would suggest that some chemists, dentists, doctors and lawyers of second generation, whose command of Vietnamese was very limited, have learned to improve their Vietnamese language skills in order to serve their Vietnamese clients who do not speak English. There is a need for second generation Vietnamese to use their Vietnamese skills in the workplace in Australia and that place of employment could serve as a real motivation for them to learn and to maintain their Vietnamese language and their cultural traditions.

### **Films, Videos, Music, Newspapers, Magazines, Books**

So far there has not been convincing evidence showing that materials such as films, videos, music, newspapers, magazines, and books in the Vietnamese language are important factors which could help children to develop their language skills. Results of this research show that very few second generation Vietnamese reported that they were interested in reading any Vietnamese newspapers, or listened to Vietnamese music, or watched Vietnamese films. Among 26 memoir respondents of second generation only one reported that she sometimes read Vietnamese newspapers and listened to Vietnamese radio programs.

*I sometimes read the weekly Nam Uc paper but I tend to listen to the radio more often (stations such as SBS Radio and Tiếng Nước Tôi [24/7 broadcasting]). I've gained a wider knowledge through these broadcastings; they not only read out "boring" news but have segments on cooking, beauty, stories of people's problems. (W. Memoir 3, Y10 student, born in Australia)*

This respondent described in her memoir that some people (her peers) “hate” Vietnamese music, but she loved it and found some of the Vietnamese entertainment shows inspiring because of the patriotic sentiments expressed in these shows.

*Even though some people "hate" or deny liking Vietnamese music, I can proudly say- I love it! Entertainment shows such as Paris by Night and Diem Xua appeal to me but my all time favourite has been Asia because they seem to be more patriotic and passionate of their words and actions. I attended several shows in San Jose and had the chance to meet some of the singers such as Y Lan, Thanh Ha, Don Ho, Tommy Ngo, Linda. Trang Dai, Khanh Ly etc. I also met Vu Khanh in a shopping outlet! I attended Du Tu Le and Tu Cong Phung's concerts and have built a great relationship with both (Du Tu Le uses email and Tu Cong Phung phones and posts). (W. Memoir 3, Y10 student, born in Australia)*

This respondent had a special gift for music. She played the violin very well and had studied music since she was very young. Her memoir revealed that she had a special interest in Vietnamese music and Vietnamese entertainment programs. She not only knew the names of popular Vietnamese singers, especially those of a younger generation, but also was able to form good relationship with some of them. Her case was not common among the participants of her age group. Several other memoir respondents also studied music and played the violin well but they did not know much about Vietnamese music or Vietnamese singers as memoir respondent 3 did.

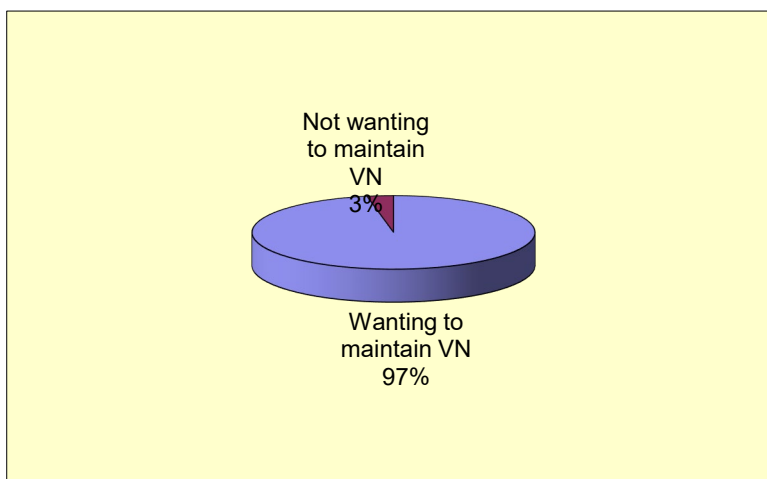
Clyne (2003: 62-63) reported that there were seventy-five radio stations, transmitting in a total of ninety-seven community languages including Vietnamese, for nearly 1,400 hours weekly, and 117 newspapers in community languages, several of them in Vietnamese, published in Australia mainly weekly and bi-weekly. However, he found that young people, especially the second generation, generally considered radio programs and community language newspapers unappealing, rendering them ineffective as a resource for reversing language shift. Clyne (2003: 63) found that television and films in community languages were more popular with young people. However, in the Vietnamese situation, culturally and politically appropriate films in Vietnamese were not shown in Australia. Vietnamese communities in Australia have strongly opposed propaganda films imported from Vietnam. Consequently, there were very few films in Vietnamese language being shown on SBS television channel at the time of this research. The number of library holdings of Vietnamese books in public libraries all over Australia has increased considerably. However, most of the books are more suitable for older generation Vietnamese and not appropriately designed for second generation Vietnamese born in Australia. Very few participants in this research reported that they had read any Vietnamese book.

Vietnamese newspapers, magazines, music, videos and books are now produced in abundance in USA, France and, to a lesser extent, in Australia and they can be purchased easily. However, most of these materials did not seem to appeal to young Vietnamese-Australians of second generation and so had no positive effect on their language maintenance process. Producers of such products may need to do more research into the interests and needs of second generation Vietnamese in Australia. They represent a small but potentially good market.

### ***Participants' Attitudes towards Vietnamese Language***

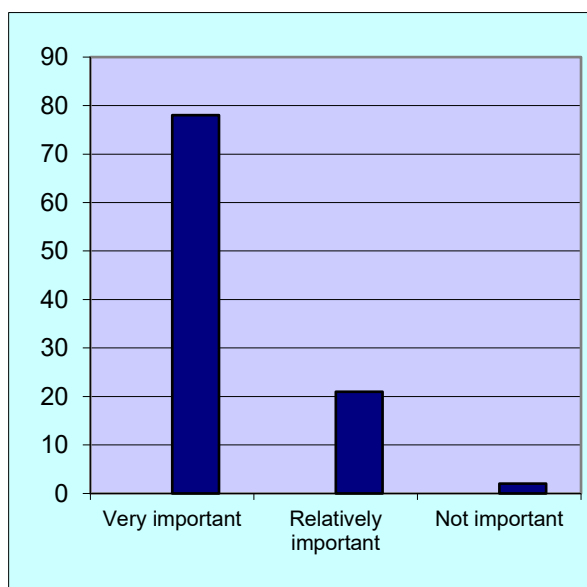
Almost all participants in the QAY group expressed positive attitudes towards the Vietnamese language through their desire to maintain the language. As many as 175 out of 180 participants (97%) responded “Yes” to the question, “Do you want to maintain the Vietnamese language?” and only five participants (3%) said “No” to that question as shown in *Chart 7.12* below.

***Chart 7. 12 Intention to Maintain Vietnamese, QAY group (N = 180 )***



Their positive attitudes were demonstrated in the fact that a very high percentage (78%) of the participants thought that it was “very important” that a Vietnamese person should be able to speak Vietnamese. Another 21% said that it was “relatively important” and only 2% thought that it was “not important” for a Vietnamese to know how to speak Vietnamese as shown in *Chart 7.13* below.

***Chart 7. 13 Importance of Vietnamese in percentage, QAY group (N = 180)***





All second generation memoir respondents thought that it was very important for them and their children to be able to speak Vietnamese. In their opinion, a Vietnamese person should know how to speak Vietnamese for the simple reason that Vietnamese was the language of their cultural origin. Some memoir writers even thought that it was shameful for a person to claim to be Vietnamese but not to know how to speak the language, as reflected in the following extracts.

*To me speaking another language like Vietnamese is very special and significant, which is why I'm not ashamed of it but rather am very gratified to be born into a family where cultural traditions are kept. In my life, the Vietnamese language plays a major and essential role, even more than the English language. This is because I am always surrounded by Vietnamese people- at home, at school, at church etc. (W. Memoir 5, Y 11 student, born in Australia)*

*I think learning Vietnamese is important in my life because this is my background and I would be ashamed if I could not speak my own language.*  
(W. Memoir 12, Y 12 student, born in Australia)

Such views were certainly reinforced by their parents' positive attitudes towards the Vietnamese language. All parents interviewed for this research thought it was very important for their children to learn how to speak Vietnamese. The parents' positive attitudes could also be seen in their strong influence on their children's choice to study Vietnamese. A small number of parents, whose children did not speak Vietnamese at all or missed out on the opportunity of studying Vietnamese consistently, expressed regret that they had not understood the importance of Vietnamese at the time and mistakenly had thought that their children would be more successful if they concentrated on English only.

***Correlation between attitudes and tendency.*** Results of Vietnamese language usage among the QAY respondents, discussed earlier in this Chapter, show that their positive attitudes towards Vietnamese language were translated well into their tendency to use the language frequently in the home domain to communicate with their parents and grandparents, and other public domains where the interlocutors did not know how to speak English. There was a close correlation between attitudes and tendency in the case of these respondents with regard to their Vietnamese language. According to Smolicz's (Secombe and Zajda, 1999) theory on education and culture, this could be seen as a positive indicator for Vietnamese language maintenance and transmission in Australia.

## **Link between Language and Identity**

Many participants saw a close link between the Vietnamese language and their cultural identity. The majority of memoir respondents firmly believed that the Vietnamese language was one of the crucial markers of their cultural identity. According to them, a person born of Vietnamese parents must know how to speak Vietnamese, otherwise that person cannot be considered as a true Vietnamese.

*Quite honestly, I believe that everyone who was born with Vietnamese parents should learn Vietnamese. They should learn to speak the language out loud and say it proud. Furthermore, it is not only about keeping the culture and tradition, but also about the recognition and identification. I remember my father once told me “no matter what you do, you will always be known as a Vietnamese”. I find this statement to be very true and have followed it closely. Therefore, I can conclude that, a person who does not speak Vietnamese, either by their own choice or their parents’, is in a way denying their background and cannot be called a true Vietnamese. (W. Memoir 14, Y 12 student, born in Vietnam)*

*If I were to be a person who could not speak the Vietnamese language, it would be a disgrace for me to call myself as a complete Vietnamese. This is because I would just be like all other Australians who speak English; the slightest differences may just be my Vietnamese lifestyle and family, if not only my Asian/Vietnamese appearance. Without the language I would be like an outcast of the Vietnamese society as I would not be able to understand yet communicate with others around me, especially my family who would not understand English-if that was the only language I were to talk to them.*

*(W. Memoir 5, Y 11 student, born in Australia)*

*Many people say that they are Vietnamese. However, they do not speak Vietnamese. I strongly believe that to be able to identify yourself as a Vietnamese person with a Vietnamese background, you must be capable of speaking the language, as well as knowing the customs and ways of the country. I identify myself as a Vietnamese person because I spoke and learnt the language since I was small and my family and I have since used and kept the Vietnamese customs alive within my family household. (W. Memoir 9, Y 11 student, born in Australia)*

*Many people say that you can only be Vietnamese if you can speak the language. Some people can’t speak much Vietnamese can also be classified as a Vietnamese but if you can’t speak Vietnamese you are a disgrace, you have the Vietnamese blood, not the language. I think that every true Vietnamese is a person who can speak his own language.*

*(W. Memoir 13, Y 11 student, born in Australia)*

There was an overwhelming sense of pride among second generation participants in their personal, as well as their collective, Vietnamese identity. They were proud of their parents, their families and their Vietnamese community achievements and felt most grateful that they had been encouraged to learn Vietnamese and to maintain it as much as possible.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the analysis of questionnaire and memoir responses in relation to this chapter, one could say that the Vietnamese language and culture are still very much alive among second generation Vietnamese in Australia who participated in this research. It was evident that the efforts made by Vietnamese parents for their children to maintain their language and culture through the home, the extended family and the ethnic schools environments did yield positive outcomes. However, it was noted that Vietnamese language attrition and shift to English among second generation Vietnamese-Australians is already apparent, especially when they communicate with their siblings and peers.

It was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter that, due to the lack of equivalent data available from the second generation Vietnamese respondents in Paris, it was not possible for the researcher to make a detailed comparison in all aspects of the Vietnamese language education, maintenance and transmission of the QAY second generation Vietnamese respondents in Adelaide with an equivalent group of second generation Vietnamese in Paris. However, based on the findings of this chapter and those of the previous chapters 5 & 6, one could come to the following concluding remarks:

- That a child born of Vietnamese parents in Australia would have a much better chance to study Vietnamese at primary and secondary and tertiary level than a child born in France because the availability of Vietnamese language programs in Australia at the time of this research was much greater than that in France. This was partly thanks to the Australian Government language policies at that time which gave significant support in terms of resources made available to minority languages in Australia. No such resources were even made available in France.
- Language maintenance and transmission to future generations of Vietnamese is one of the main concerns of Vietnamese parents in Australia and to a lesser degree Vietnamese parents in France. Vietnamese parents in Australia had much greater positive influence on their children with regard to their learning and maintaining Vietnamese compared to the parents in France.
- That the second generation Vietnamese respondents in Australia had a higher level of Vietnamese literacy skills and a greater level of bilingualism (English-Vietnamese) compared to those in France at the time.
- The correlation between positive attitudes towards the Vietnamese language and their tendency to learn and use the language in their day to day life was more evident in the respondents in Adelaide compared to those in Paris.

- Based on Smolicz's theory on education and culture (Secombe and Zajda, 1999) one could say that the Vietnamese linguistic reservoirs in Australia was much richer and more readily available for second generation Vietnamese to use in order to form their personal and collective linguistic systems compared to those living in France. This is one of the benefits of the multicultural policy of the Australian Government which does not exist in France.

The findings of this chapter and the previous Chapter 6 also indicated that Vietnamese language were very important to the Vietnamese of both first and second generations. It played a vital role in forming the Vietnamese group identity, connecting people of the same cultural background from wherever they live, especially with those in Vietnam. Vietnamese language has indeed a very important cultural value, and is a sign of solidarity and unity among people of Vietnamese cultural background all over the world.

## **SECTION IV: VIETNAMESE SOCIAL SYSTEMS AND CULTURAL IDENTITY**

## **Chapter 8: The Vietnamese Family as a Social System for Cultural Transmission and Integration into Mainstream Society in Australia and France**

### ***Introduction***

In view of the humanistic theory described in Chapter 3, both the home and the community can be regarded as group systems of social values, whose members are held together by their participation in certain cultural activities. Thus, the Vietnamese community in general can be regarded as a secondary group system where relationships among members can be formal or informal. The Vietnamese family, in contrast, must be regarded as a primary group system as, by nature, family involves relationships which are intimate and face to face. These group systems act as "reservoir stocks" which individual members draw upon in the construction of their personal systems of social values, at both primary and secondary level.

The social systems of the Vietnamese communities in France and in Australia are examined in Chapter 9. In this chapter the researcher examines in detail the nature of the Vietnamese family as a primary group system, as it was revealed in respondents' memoirs, as well as their responses to the main questionnaire. An analysis of the respondents' description and evaluation of this primary social system was important in order to discover the extent to which participation in this social system might have influenced the formation of the respondents' other cultural systems, especially their attitudes towards the maintenance of Vietnamese language and culture. It was hoped that the results of this analysis would reveal some insights into the ways in which family life had affected the process of cultural adaptation and integration into mainstream society of the Vietnamese immigrants living in Australia, as compared to those living in France.

### ***The Vietnamese Family as a Primary Social System***

The data obtained from the participants' memoirs and questionnaire responses confirmed that the Vietnamese family system was the most important group social system in the lives of the participants in this study, both in Australia and France. The family formed their primary group system where relationships were very close, intimate and enduring. Examining in detail the participants' family patterns in both countries gave a clearer view

of how those who were born in Vietnam and those who were born in the host country (Australia or France) adapted themselves to the patterns of family life which prevailed in the host country.

The concrete fact profiles indicated that out of a total of 400 participants in this study, 136 (34%) of them came to the host country as refugees and 110 (28%) came as migrants under the family reunion scheme (see Chapter 4, *Table 4.4*). All of these were uprooted from a cultural environment where extended family life was of utmost importance. In Vietnam the family had provided them with both moral and economic support. For many of these participants, coming to France or Australia meant separation from other members of the extended family and friends and even a split in the nuclear family unit.

## Family Structure

According to Nguyễn Xuân Thu (1990), ‘family’ is a word with almost sacred connotation for Vietnamese people, whether they live in Vietnam or outside, in countries such as Australia and France. This word evokes, in the mind of any Vietnamese person, an image of a physical home where three or four generations live together harmoniously. When talking about a house, people in Vietnam never use the term ‘bedroom’ to describe its capacity, such as a three or four-bedroom house. This is, because, firstly, bedrooms are not the most important part of the house, and, secondly, ‘bedroom’ implies a certain degree of ‘individualism’ which is unfamiliar to the majority of Vietnamese people. Internal walls of the house are considered inappropriate as they are seen as creating division and distance among family members and consequently, damage the family’s wholeness and solidarity (Nguyễn Xuân Thu, 1990: 32).

Nguyễn Xuân Thu (1990) also maintains that the family home in Vietnam is not only a dwelling place but is also used for other important functions. The centre of the family home is the altar, where family members gather to worship their ancestors, to celebrate the anniversary of the death of a family member or, during the Vietnamese New Year, to hold ceremonies to pray and ask for blessings from their ancestors and the Supreme Being of their respective beliefs, as Christians or Buddhists. The family home is the first and most important school where children are taught about the moral code and appropriate behaviour towards relatives and friends of the family. The family home is a place where most family conflicts and disputes between members are resolved by the head of the family clan. Finally, the family home is the place where elderly parents and

aged relatives are cared for and supported by the younger generations as there is no such thing as nursing homes for the elderly in Vietnam (Nguyễn Xuân Thu, 1990: 32-33).

This extended family living pattern was highly regarded by all the respondents in this study but, at a practical level, it was impossible for them to establish such a living structure in the host country. This is, firstly, because the majority of them came to the host country (Australia or France) as refugees, without family members, and, secondly, this extended family structure is totally opposite to the common pattern of the nuclear family life-style that many Vietnamese have now become accustomed to in the host country. Through the family reunion scheme, which was given high priority by both the French and the Australian governments over thirty years, many Vietnamese, in France and in Australia, were able to sponsor their spouses, their children, their siblings and elderly parents to reunite with them in the host country. Thus, many large Vietnamese extended family units have now been established in Australia and in France.

Data obtained from memoirs and questionnaire responses revealed that the settlement process which many respondents had used to bring members of their family to Australia was similar to the story reported by oral memoir respondent 38 as follows.

One early morning in June 1989, this respondent decided to risk his life, for the sake of his family, by escaping from Vietnam in a small fishing boat with a few other people. After many days floating in the ocean without any hope, he finally reached Galang refugee camp, Indonesia. He then had to endure a very hard life in the refugee camp for three long years before he was successfully sponsored by his oldest son, 18 years old at the time, who had escaped with other relatives a few years earlier and had already settled in Australia.

*Em đến Úc vào ngày ba mươi tháng chín năm 1992. Là người tỵ nạn bằng thuyền, em đến trại định cư Galang tại Indonesia, ở trại 3 năm và sau đó được người con trai đã đến Úc định cư trước bảo lãnh theo diện đoàn tụ gia đình.*

*I arrived in Australia on the thirtieth of September 1992. I was one of the boat people who arrived at Galang refugee camp in Indonesia at that time. I stayed at that camp for three years then I was sponsored by my son to Australia under the family reunion scheme. (O. Memoir 38, male, born 1947, arrived in Australia 1992)*

When he finally arrived in Australia in September 1992, he felt a great sense of release because he had found freedom in a country of his dream:



*Khi tới đây (Úc) em cảm thấy rất là vui vì đây chính là đoạn đường kết thúc của một chuyến đi tìm tự do và đã chính thức đặt chân đến được nước thứ ba mà mình chọn làm nơi định cư. Vui hơn nữa là sau bao năm chờ đợi mỗi mòn tại trại tỵ nạn giờ đã tìm được một quê hương như lòng mong ước.*

*I felt a great joy when I arrived here (Australia) because I finally ended a long journey searching for freedom. I felt the joy of being able to set foot in the third country where I chose to settle for good. I felt even happier when I realised that I had finally found the country of my dream after so many years of desperately waiting at the refugee camp.*

*(O. Memoir 38, male, born 1947, arrived in Australia 1992)*

However, this feeling of joy changed into sadness when he realised that, while he was living in a rich and free country with lots of opportunities for him to make a new life, his wife and two children whom he left behind in Vietnam, were not safe. He could not ever feel happy if his family was not complete.

*Đó chính là nỗi buồn của những người xa xứ, hơn nữa em lại gặp cái cảnh gia đình ly tán, chồng một nơi vợ một nẻo, con cái mỗi đứa một nơi. Dù rằng niềm vui được đặt chân đến đất mới, là một quốc gia tự do, dân chủ, giàu mạnh, hy vọng có được một cơ hội mới tạo dựng lại cuộc sống, tuy nhiên không tránh khỏi những lúc cảm thấy gia đình ly tán, nên cảm giác lúc ấy cũng buồn vui lẫn lộn.*

*This is the greatest sadness of those who are living away from their own country. Furthermore, in my situation, I have to suffer the family separation. I was in one country, my wife and my children were living apart from each other, in another country. Although I experienced the joy of having arrived in a new country, a land of freedom, democracy, richness and the opportunity for me to establish a new life, this feeling of joy was always mixed with sadness because of my separation from my family at the time.*

*(O. Memoir 38, male, born 1947, arrived in Australia 1992)*

So he immediately lodged an application for his wife and other two children to come to Australia, under the family reunion scheme, so that his whole immediate family could be re-united in Australia.

*Khi đi vượt biên em chỉ đi được có một mình, lúc ấy vợ và hai con còn ở lại Việt Nam. Vì thế khi đến định cư tại Úc em đã làm bảo lãnh ngay cho vợ con đến Úc.*

*I escaped alone and left my wife and two children in Vietnam. Therefore, when I arrived in Australia, I immediately lodged the application to sponsor my wife and children to Australia.*

*(O. Memoir 38, male, born 1947, arrived in Australia 1992)*

The sponsoring process took another three years before all the immediate members of this family were finally reunited. Soon after the arrival of his wife, they established a sewing business and worked extremely hard to save enough money for the education of not only

their four children but also four children of his sister-in-law (still in Vietnam at the time) throughout their high school, then university years. During this period, this couple also helped to sponsor some other relatives from refugee camps in South East Asia, their siblings and their elderly parents from Vietnam. By 2005, all of their children, nieces and nephews, whom they had supported for many years, had become university graduates. All eight of them are now married with children of their own and work as engineers in South Australia. Once their four nieces and nephews became independent professionals, they in turn, sponsored their parents to join them in Australia. At the wedding ceremony of the respondent's youngest daughter, a PhD civil engineer, in 2006, the researcher was invited to this wedding; she observed the presence of a four-generation extended family gathering, consisting of great-grandparents, grandparents, parents and children plus many uncles and aunties with their own children, a total number of approximately 150 people belonging to this extended family. This was achieved over a period of more than twenty-five years and through great sacrifices, both financial and emotional, from those members of the family who came to Australia first in 1985.

Memoir respondent 38's extended family, like many other large Vietnamese-Australian family units among oral memoir contributors (Nos 28, 29, 34, 35, 37, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 51, 52, 54) no longer tried to live under the same roof or on the same property as they used to in Vietnam. Instead, they chose to form many nuclear family units consisting of only parents and their children living as separate households. However, in order to foster their family relationships, they all bought houses near to one another, in the same suburb. Extended family members of respondent 38 all lived in a suburb at walking distance from the Vietnamese Catholic Community in South Australia, so that they could attend church services daily and participate in group activities organised by the Vietnamese Catholic Community. By attending church services regularly, many older members of this extended family were able to see each other almost every day and, at weekends, the whole extended family would gather together for a meal or for family celebrations such as weddings, baptisms, funerals or the anniversary of a death.

This pattern of family life seemed to suit the Vietnamese very well in Australia and, to a lesser degree, in France. Although not living in the same household, the connections and the bonds among members of the extended family were still strong. They provided financial and moral support to each other whenever a member of the family needed help. They visited each other regularly. They were concerned for each other's wellbeing and

prosperity. They made sure that the good name of their family was protected. The Vietnamese family pattern established in the host country, is essentially a blend between the Western nuclear family systems with some important elements of the extended family structure of Eastern culture.

## **Changing Roles and Relationships**

Traditionally, according to Nguyễn Xuân Thu (1990) and Jelen (1993) the main objective of Vietnamese family life was to maintain the continuity and the good name of the family. In order to achieve this objective, each family member had a role to play. In the Vietnamese traditional family, the father was the head of the family and often the sole family breadwinner. The mother usually stayed at home looking after the children and doing all domestic chores such as cooking and cleaning. The older siblings were expected to be role models for the younger ones to follow and had the responsibility to help them in many different ways, especially coaching with homework. Girls were expected to help the mother with domestic tasks and learn from her how to behave towards her future husband and his family members (Nguyễn Xuân Thu, 1990; Jelen, 1993).

Life in the host country has influenced many changes in these traditional family structure, roles and relationships. The three aspects of Vietnamese family life which have undergone the most changes in the process of adaptation into the new society, reside in the roles and relationships among members of the family, namely, the relationships between husband and wife, between parents and children and the way in which Vietnamese families care for aged parents and elderly relatives.

## **Relationships between Husband and Wife**

In the traditional Vietnamese family, the daughters were also taught that, once they got married, they belonged to their husbands and their husbands' family. The wife's responsibilities were not only towards her own family but also to the entire family of her husband as well. The wife depended on her husband for everything, including her finances. It was unacceptable and impossible for a woman to divorce her husband in Vietnam even when their relationship became unbearable because, if she left her husband, she would not have anywhere to go. She could not go back to her own parents' home because a divorced woman was regarded as bringing shame to her parents. Financially, she would not survive on her own. So many women in Vietnam, in the past were caught in this dilemma (Nguyễn Xuân Thu, 1990; Jelen, 1993).

It has been noted that the relationship between husband and wife within the Vietnamese families who settled in France and Australia, has not changed a great deal among older couples, but is more obvious among younger couples. The observational data showed a similar pattern of change in France and Australia. However, evidence from oral memoirs revealed some variations between the two countries. Among twenty-one oral memoir respondents of working age, from Australia (Nos 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 47, 48, 49, 52, 53) fifteen (71%) (Nos 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 47, 48, 52) were in the situation where both husband and wife were working, while, in France, out of eight couples (Nos 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12) of working age at the time, there were only two (25%) (Nos 7 and 12) with both husband and wife working. One of the reasons for this discrepancy could be that it was harder for Vietnamese women in France to find work than those in Australia, especially those with no qualifications and/or with very little knowledge of the language (French) as expressed in the following oral memoir from a woman who had settled in France in 1984.

*Theo em thấy, vấn đề đàn bà bên này khó kiếm việc làm, nhất là những tỉnh nhỏ thì rất khó, lên Paris hay tỉnh lớn thì chỉ có được việc may vá hay làm vườn thôi. Đối với người mình thì thứ nhất là vì vấn đề ngôn ngữ, vì mình qua đây đã quá cái lứa tuổi học hành, thành ra mình không thể học tiếp lên nữa, mình chỉ có thể làm những công việc tay chân thôi mà những công việc tay chân thì đa số những tỉnh lớn mới có còn những tỉnh nhỏ như nơi em đang ở thì ít lắm. Với lại phần lớn người ta chọn người Tây tại vì bây giờ người Tây rất là kỳ thị.*

*In my opinion, it is difficult for women to find work here in France, especially in small towns. In Paris or in bigger towns, women can find jobs such as sewing or domestic work. But for Vietnamese people, the biggest obstacle is the language. When we came here, we had already passed the age of studying so we could not continue our academic path. Consequently, we could only do manual work and the opportunity to find even manual work hardly exists in a small town where we are living in at present. Besides, in most cases, they (employers) prefer to choose Westerners because now French people are very prejudiced.*

*(O. Memoir 1, female, born 1963, arrived in France 1984)*

This respondent was sponsored by her boyfriend to France from a refugee camp in South East Asia in 1984 when she was only twenty-one years old. She got married immediately after her arrival in France and had their first child the following year. So she stayed at home looking after her family which increased by one member every second year. Her husband was the only breadwinner and had to work very hard to support a family of five for so many years. She was not able to get any work in the town where they lived and she believed that it was partly because of her lack of French language, her lack of

qualifications and partly because of discrimination in the workplace. According to her, French companies preferred to employ Westerners to Asians.

This particular respondent has a sister, who is one year younger and now living in Australia (oral memoir respondent 39). These two siblings escaped from Vietnam together and arrived in Paula Pidong refugee camp in 1983. But from the refugee camp, each went their separate ways. The younger sibling chose to go to Australia with her boyfriend while her older sister joined her boyfriend in France. Memoir respondent 39's level of education, her English language skills and her family situation were identical to her sister's in France. In fact, respondent 39 married the younger brother of respondent 1's husband (two sisters married two brothers) and both couples had three boys of the same age group. Respondent 39 was able to work almost immediately when she arrived in Australia and during the last 27 years living in Australia she was able to raise her children, gave them a good education and at the same time contributed to the family income as a second breadwinner. At the time of the interview, respondent 39 owned two houses, four cars and other assets. Her sister in France, by contrast, still lived in a housing trust apartment with her family and tried to make ends meet with one income earner. The hardest thing for respondent 1 and her husband was to find enough money to support their children's university education in France. Thus, it appeared that respondent 39 was much better off, compared with her sister in France. This story seemed to confirm the researcher's observation that a Vietnamese refugee family settled in Australia had a better chance to succeed and to realise their dreams for their children than a family with similar characteristics in France.

However, another issue to be considered here is whether the financial situation and work opportunity have had any influence on the relationships between husband and wife in these two families. Comments from their oral memoirs and questionnaires showed an interesting picture. Both of these women thought that living in the host country had changed their views on women and their roles in the family. Respondent 1, although she had never worked in France and therefore, was financially dependent on her husband, said that her husband gave her total control of the money. She was treated with respect and had an equal say on all family matters. As she was better educated than her husband, she could exercise more influence on her children's education and their career choices. In contrast, although respondent 39 in Australia was most of the time, the second income earner for the family and was more financially comfortable than her sister in France, she

felt that her husband still expected her to do all the domestic tasks (cooking, cleaning, shopping etc..) as well as caring for three young children when she came home from work. He also expected her to obey him and let him do whatever he wanted, including liaisons with other women. This was a typical attitude of a young man living in the Western culture but behaving in an old-fashioned way. Respondent 39 tried to fulfil her role as a wife and mother for many years without much support and recognition from her husband. She felt that she was not treated fairly. Her marriage no longer had any meaning and satisfaction for her so, at the end of 2006, she decided to separate from her husband to end the marriage. Her decision came as a shock to her husband. He thought that she would never dare to make such a decision.

This situation was not commonly found in the Vietnamese community in France or in Australia as statistical evidence showed that the divorce rate among the participants was relatively small (2% for those in the QAA group in Australia and 0% for those in the QF group in France - See Chapter 4, *Table 4.1*). However, this story illustrated the situation where the migration process and economic independence have enabled this woman to stand up for herself, refusing to accept her husband's attitudes and behaviour based on the old way of thinking expressed in a popular saying: *chồng chúa vợ tôi* [husband is king and wife is servant]. The status of women in traditional Vietnamese society was much lower than men.

Over the life time of most adult Vietnamese women, demographic changes in Vietnam, along with war and rapid urbanisation, have already acted to weaken ties within the traditional patrilineal extended family. In particular, the massive movement of people from rural to city areas since the 1950's has led to the development of different forms of social organisation in Vietnam. The changes in conceptualisations of the patrilineage will not immediately transform power relations within the family, as men in urban Vietnam still generate most of the income for their families. Although women were almost always involved in decision-making and often generated some income of their own, men's economic contribution was greater (Thomas, 1999). As the family was also the unit of social welfare and there was no welfare assistance provided by the government, strong attempts were made by women to avoid disrupting family ties. Women in Vietnam often stayed in unhappy marriages in order to be certain of social acceptance and economic security, which they felt only their husbands could provide. Although many Vietnamese

women of the 1950's fully engaged in public life and work in Australia and in France, their status within the family did not seem to alter much in this regard.

However, evidence from memoirs showed that the majority of couples among the memoir contributors, especially those of a younger age group, have adopted a modern Western view of marriage. They considered marriage as an equal partnership between two individuals with equal rights and responsibilities. It was a legal contract based on mutual love and respect for each other. Therefore, to make the marriage work, they had to share and help each other in all aspects of family life including domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning and looking after the children. Memoir evidence showed that this situation applied equally to young Vietnamese families in Australia (Nos 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 31, 38, 47) and those in France (Nos 1, 7, 9, 11, 12).

### **Relationships between Parents and Children**

In the traditional Vietnamese family structure in the past, the husband or the father was the sole income earner of the family, and he played the role of a *ng nghiêm phụ* (severe father) towards his children, while his wife stayed at home looking after her children and played the role of a *tì mẫu* (tender mother). Both characteristics, hard and soft, were believed to be extremely important in teaching children to become pious members of the family and good citizens. Children were taught never to contradict or disobey their parents. Parents and grandparents exercised strong influence in matters related to their children's choice of career, education and marriage. In the past, only sons were encouraged to pursue their education and to follow their father's career, whereas daughters mainly stayed at home and helped their mothers in cooking and housework.

Although circumstances in the host country, such as in Australia and France, have caused considerable changes in the relationship between parents and children within the family unit, many parents of the first migration generation, still applied the traditional method of raising children. They developed a close relationship, even high dependency, between their children and the family. They would expect absolute obedience and respect from their children. For some parents among the respondents, disobedience was considered as a serious offence against the family moral code called "đạo hiếu" [filial piety] and children committing this offence must be punished severely. One of the forms

of punishment could even include corporal punishment as in the case reported by a Vietnamese parent from France in her oral memoir below.

*Em luôn dạy chúng (con em) là khi ba mẹ nói thì không bao giờ được cãi. Có lần vào ngày mồng một tết đưa con lớn của em đi xi-nê với bạn nó, em không cho và nói đó là ngày của gia đình. Nó không chịu em lấy roi đánh nó. Đánh xong để nó suy nghĩ rồi tối đến em mới nói chuyện với nó. Em bảo nó suy nghĩ xem nó sai hay em sai. Cuối cùng thì nó nói rằng em đúng. Em không bao giờ đánh con trong lúc nóng giận cả vì em đánh để dạy con chứ không phải cho đã cơn giận*

*I have always taught my children never to disobey or contradict their parents. There was a time when my oldest daughter wanted to go to cinema with her friends on the first day of the Vietnamese New Year, a special day for our family, so I did not give her the permission. She refused to accept my ruling and argued with me. I gave her a few slaps with a stick then I left her there to reflect on her behaviour to see who was wrong. That night I had a good talk with her, and she admitted that her behaviour was wrong. I punished my children to educate them but never did so to let out my anger on them.*

*(O. Memoir 11, female, born 1948, arrived in France 1966)*

This respondent 11 and her husband were well educated professionals in France at the time. They came to France in the 1960's as students. They got married after graduation and stayed on in France after the fall of Saigon in 1975. At the time of the interview, this couple had no son but two daughters studying at university. They were born in France. Respondent 11 came from a strict and highly respected family in the traditional Vietnamese society. She was educated by her parents to become a Vietnamese young woman with clear Confucian values, "tứ đức" [four virtues]. Therefore, she in turn tried to educate her daughters in a similar way. This respondent 11 reported that she talked and shared a lot of things with her daughters. She encouraged them to openly discuss or negotiate with their parents, any matter concerning their lives. However, there were a number of non-negotiable topics such as the proper conduct and behaviour required of them as young virtuous Vietnamese women and their academic future in France. They did not have any say but had to follow their parents' wishes in the choice of university courses and school subjects, including learning Vietnamese up to year twelve. This mother exercised powerful influence on her daughters' education and their roles in the family as well as in society. So far, she has seemed to be successful in her relationships with her daughters. It remains to be seen how long she can keep this relationship going without real tension and conflicts in her family.



## Parents' Expectations

In the past boys and girls were treated differently by their parents because of their different roles and responsibilities in the Vietnamese traditional family. The gender distinction is not so pronounced nowadays but it still exists in certain aspects of family life in the host country. Boys and girls are now given the same educational opportunities and equal status by the family but boys certainly enjoy greater freedom than girls in their social life. Girls are not allowed to go out with boys and they are expected to behave in a gracious manner towards older members of the family and in the wider community. These restrictions have created tension and frustration between parents and children in many Vietnamese migrant families today as expressed strongly by written memoir respondent 7, a year 12 student, in the following extract of her memoir.

*Having a Vietnamese background is like having a rock chained to your legs. You are restricted from every possible activity under the sun. It is extremely frustrating, especially when I would like to "go out", the old folks are so protective. I can go anywhere as long as there are no "boys" coming as well, I have to go home early etc. I cannot laugh too loud; I can't joke with older people and I can't talk to boyfriends! It's ridiculous! When I ask why I can't do those things my parents just say "because you are a girl". If anyone gave me one dollar for every time they said that, I'd become a millionaire.*

*(W. Memoir 7, Y 12 student, female, born in Thailand)*

This respondent clearly felt the heavy burden of being born a Vietnamese girl. She could not accept the restrictions put on her just because she was a girl. The feeling of absolute frustration expressed in her memoir was commonly found among female memoir respondents of the same age group in Australia (W.M.Nos 3, 5, 6, 9, 11 and O.M Nos 16, 17, 18, 19, 21).

A girl is still expected to help her mother in domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning and her younger siblings, especially if she happens to be the first-born child. This responsibility can become a real burden for many Vietnamese young girls as expressed by a girl in Year 11 in her written memoir.

*At home, my life was greatly different compared to other white Australian children. I was also born as the eldest of five children in a Vietnamese family and to me this has always been one of the heaviest responsibilities in my life. As my parents would always remind me, "You're the eldest so you must act correctly to be a good role model for your siblings". Sometimes, I just want to escape this responsibility and be free. Apart from this, I must carry that burden and the great pressure from my Vietnamese family who constantly push me to study well and to maintain my cultural traditions so that my future could be bright.*

*(W. Memoir 5, Y 11 student, female, born in Australia)*

Vietnamese parents strongly believe that if they raise their oldest son or daughter well academically, the eldest can act as a role model for the younger siblings so that they can all help each other to succeed. The rejection of traditional values in relation to female roles was commonly found among female memoir respondents of the same age group (W.M.Nos 3, 5, 6, 9, 11 and O.M Nos 16, 17, 18, 19, 21).

It has been well recognised that Vietnamese parents, regardless of their social status and background in Vietnam, on arrival in the host country, all tried to achieve the most important dream of their life which is the academic achievement of their children. They wanted to achieve this dream not only for the benefit of their children's future but also for their personal pride and for the honour of their family. In order to obtain academic success for their children, they would be prepared to sacrifice everything, including their own happiness. They also put tremendous pressure on their children, sometimes to the detriment of their happiness and joy in life as young children, as in the case reported by a Year 12 student in her written memoir.

*Almost one hundred per cent of Vietnamese parents are super protective and demanding. I remember throughout all my schooling years my parents demanded "straight A's", and I had to take on all the enormous responsibilities because I was the "oldest girl". I was the one who had to set the ultimate example; if I received a B+, or any grade below an A- my parents would act as though the world was coming to an end. I mean, I understand that my parents want the best for me, but surely I cannot excel at everything! I find that being a Vietnamese-Australian my expectations are raised much higher than other Australians, and I also find that being a Vietnamese I need to act like a martyr to "save face" for my family and community. (W. Memoir 7, Y 12 student, female, born in Thailand)*

Both parents of memoir respondent 5 and respondent 7 came from humble family backgrounds. They arrived in Australia in the early 1980's and established themselves in this country by hard work and dedication. Parents of respondent 7 had a fruit and vegetable store in the market where all the members of her extended family had to help in the running of the shop. Respondent 7, being the oldest child, had to look after three younger children after school, making sure that they all studied well and she also helped in the shop during school holidays and at weekends. It was a very demanding role for her to fulfill her parents' high expectations. However, she managed to pass well in her final Year 12 examination at the end of 2005 and is currently in her second year of pharmacy at the University of South Australia.

Respondent 5's parents, on the other hand, were full-time factory workers but they upheld the same values and expectations for their eldest daughter. Similar to respondent 7, respondent 5 had a certain passive resistance to her parents' demands at first but also appreciated her parents' absolute commitment to her academic success. So she worked hard and took on her responsibility towards her two younger brothers seriously. The results of her efforts were already obvious: at the end of 2006 she passed her year 12 examinations with very good results and was admitted to the pharmacy course at the same university as two of her classmates (W. Memoirs Nos 9, 11). These two couples believed in hard work and they were prepared to sacrifice everything in terms of material comfort in order to save money for their children's education in Catholic schools.

As these parents did not speak English well and did not know much about the education system in Australia, they had to rely entirely on their oldest daughters to help other children with their school work. They also needed their oldest daughters to act as interpreters for them in situations where they had to deal with the outside world. So these children often played the reverse roles of their parents because of their English skills and they were often considered as the most knowledgeable and valuable members of the family. This reverse role situation worked reasonably well for these two families because the two girls were mature and responsible in their behaviour. However, observational data showed that this reverse role situation did not always foster a healthy relationship between parents and children as some children would take advantage of the situation. They cheated their parents, forged their parents' signatures on letters that they wrote on behalf of their parents to their school's principal, making false claims on their absences from school etc...

### **The Elderly Parents**

In the Vietnamese family system, when the parents are becoming older, their children and grandchildren have the responsibility to look after them and to provide them with everything they need because no welfare system exists in Vietnam. In their failing years, aged parents usually live in the family home with their eldest son or daughter and their families until they die. It is a duty of the children and grandchildren to provide their elderly parents and grandparents with both emotional and material support with total loyalty of heart and with great devotion and respect. They are highly valued for their wisdom and experience and therefore, they can exercise considerable influence on

matters concerning their children and grandchildren. They act as links between the living and the dead, between ancestors and their offsprings; they represent the unity and the spirit of the family. Thus, the elderly in Vietnam still maintain a vital role in family and society. The younger generation has to respect them and acknowledge their contribution.

Over the last thirty years, many Vietnamese migrant families in France and in Australia have been able to sponsor their elderly parents to join them in the host country. Evidence shows that only a small number of families was able to provide an environment where their elderly parents could live happily with them in the same house. The majority of elderly parents found it very difficult to adjust to this new way of life because of their lack of language skills, their inability to adapt to climatic conditions and [the] social structure of the host country, but most importantly, their inability to accept changes as observed by oral memoir respondent 9 about the situation of his elderly mother living in France.

*Khó cho những người già vì những người già thì khó lòng mà thích hợp với môi trường người Pháp, cái thứ nhất là khí hậu, cái thứ hai là tiếng nói. Bà cụ, mẹ em tiếng Pháp không biết nhiều, ra ngoài đường thì nói với ai cũng không dám nên bây giờ không đi ra ngoài nữa.*

*It is very hard for the elderly because they cannot adapt themselves to the new environment in France. They cannot get used to firstly, the climate and secondly, the language. My mother does not know much French so when she goes out, she dares not speak to anyone and now she no longer goes out.*

*(O. Memoir 9, male, born 1957, arrived in France 1980)*

A social worker working for the Vietnamese Catholic Community in Paris reported a number of cases where the elderly Vietnamese found life in France very difficult. Many stories of their loneliness are similar to the following.

*Một cái thí dụ đó là có một bà nọ cứ hay đến nói chuyện với em là bà khổ quá vì cả tuần bị nhốt trong nhà, mà vừa mở cửa ra ngoài gặp ông Tây thì sợ quá đóng cửa cái rầm bỏ chạy vào nhà; nhớ Việt Nam quá mà về không được; còn con cái thì cuối tuần mới thấy mặt mà lại bận bịu việc nhà cửa; cháu chắt thì không thích ngồi nói chuyện với bà mà thích đi ra ngoài đánh tennis với bạn. Vì vậy nên bà không có ai để tâm sự, buồn quá bà ngồi khóc một mình.*

*There was an elderly Vietnamese woman who used to come to talk to me. She told me that she had felt suffocated being confined in the house all the week and but, when she opened the door, she saw a French man. She was very scared so she shut the door immediately and ran inside. She missed Vietnam a lot but could not go back. Her children worked during the week and on the weekend, they were busy with domestic chores. Her grandchildren did not want to talk to her; they preferred going out or playing tennis with friends. So she felt very sad and lonely and she often cried alone.*

*(A social worker, Vietnamese Catholic Community in France)*

This elderly woman was leading a miserable life in France. She was filled with fear; her house became a prison. She was very lonely but not able to communicate or share her concerns with anyone including her children because they were busy with their work. In Vietnam she would have many neighbours to talk to and she would find joy in looking after her grandchildren when they come home from school but in France her grandchildren did not want to talk or play with her because of the language barrier and generation gap. She felt completely lost and useless in the family. Evidence showed that this situation was commonly found among elderly Vietnamese living in France and Australia. A number of elderly people in Australia and in France were so unhappy that they decided to return to Vietnam, knowing that they would have to give up the material comfort provided for them in the host country, as observed by oral memoir respondent 9 about the situation of the elderly Vietnamese in France.

*Có nhiều gia đình cũng bảo lãnh cha mẹ sang đây ở luôn nhưng mà chỉ sau hai ba tháng thì nằng nặc đòi về Việt Nam vì buồn quá; đa số chỉ ở nhà một mình với con với cháu mà chúng nó thì cũng đi làm hay đi học hết, cuối tuần nó mới có giờ rảnh chở lên giáo xứ một tí hoặc là đi chợ Tàu một tí. Rất là buồn và cô đơn.*

*A number of families sponsored their elderly parents to France as permanent residents but, only after two or three months, their parents asked to return to Vietnam because they could not bear the loneliness in the new country. The majority of them have had to stay home by themselves. Their children and grandchildren have to go to work or school and only at weekends do they have some spare time to bring their elderly parents to church or to go shopping with them in Chinese grocery shops. Their life here is indeed very sad and lonely.*  
(O. Memoir 9, male, born 1957, arrived in France 1980)

Although the number of elderly Vietnamese who had returned to Vietnam was relatively small, those who came back refound their happiness living in their own country, among relatives and friends as in the case of oral memoir respondent 5. At the time of interview, oral memoir respondent 5 said that she would like to go back to retire in Vietnam because she did not want to go to a nursing home. Indeed, she left France in 2005 after thirty-four years of living there. The researcher had the opportunity to meet her in Vietnam in April 2007 and found that she was living happily among people of her own age group (80 and 90 years old), well looked after by younger members of her religious community. The thought of returning to Vietnam to live among their compatriots in old age was in the mind of many oral memoir respondents.

*Thì nghĩ đến cái tuổi già, trở lại quê hương với những người đồng thanh đồng tiếng với mình, với những người tuy xa lạ nhưng mình vẫn thấy có cảm tình hơn*

*là sống với cái tuổi già ở nước ngoài. Về già mà ở nước ngoài vào mùa đông thì cực lắm, bất cứ ở nước Mỹ hay nước Pháp cũng thế.*

*I think that in the old age, you should return to live in your own country, among your compatriots, people of the same language; even if these people are not related to you, you still feel more connected and happier than living in a foreign country. It is very hard for old people to cope with the cold winter in any country such as USA or France. (O. Memoir 4, female, born 1923, arrived in France 1952)*

Even some people of younger generations expressed their wish to return to Vietnam to retire, as revealed in some oral memoir interviews, along the same lines as the following extract of an oral memoir.

*Em thấy cái xứ sở này không hợp với người lớn tuổi. Còn trẻ thì đi đây đi đó, khi lớn tuổi rồi thì chỉ ở nhà mà càng ở nhà thì càng chán. Bây giờ mình vì hạnh phúc và tương lai của con cái nên mình sống ở đây. Nhưng khi về già vì cái đời sống tinh thần của mình thì tại sao mình không trở về đất nước của mình để mà mình sống - nơi mình sinh ra và lớn lên- có bà con, hàng xóm và những người Việt Nam.*

*I can see that this country is not suitable for old people. When you are young you can go out but when you are old you have to stay home and the more you stay home, the more you feel bored. Now, because of the future happiness of my children I stay here but when I get older, I don't see why for my own wellbeing, I should not return to my country, where I was born and grew up, to live among my relatives, my neighbours and my compatriots*

*(O. Memoir 1, female, born 1963, arrived in France 1984)*

Others agreed that life in a Western country was not suitable for elderly Vietnamese because they could not adapt themselves to the new country. Therefore, some Vietnamese community leaders would advise people not to bring their elderly parents to France or Australia, thinking that the elderly Vietnamese would be better off living in Vietnam among their own people, because family members living overseas can support the elderly by sending them some money regularly.

*Những người già trên sáu mươi tuổi trở lên sang Pháp, cái nếp sống ở Pháp không thích hợp nhất là ở Paris. Vì vậy mà nếu ai hỏi ý kiến em là có nên bảo lãnh cha mẹ qua đây hay không thì em khuyên là hãy để cha mẹ sống ở Việt Nam và cứ mỗi tháng gửi tiền về cho cha mẹ, ông bà. Nếu cha mẹ sống ở đây thì cũng tốn mà sống ở Việt Nam thì cũng tốn, vì vậy con cái gửi cho cha mẹ mỗi người chừng hai trăm rưỡi mỗi tháng thì họ có thể sống rất tốt ở Việt Nam.*

*Life in France, especially in Paris is not suitable to those Vietnamese who are over sixty. Therefore, if someone asks me whether they should bring their parents here or not, I strongly advise them not to sponsor their elderly parents here. I encourage them to leave their parents or grandparents in Vietnam. I explain to them that instead of paying for their parents' living expenses in France, they can*

*send to each parent about two hundred and fifty francs each month. Their parents would thus have a much happier and more fulfilling life in Vietnam.*

*(A social worker, Vietnamese Catholic Community in France)*

One of the most difficult things for Vietnamese people living in the host country was looking after their elderly parents when they needed high care. Most elderly people found it hard to accept having to go to a nursing home but for the Vietnamese elderly it is much harder because of their language problem and cultural differences. In the nursing home, the elderly Vietnamese would not be able to communicate their needs to nurses or doctors. They could not talk to other residents; they could not eat the food provided. Thus, many Vietnamese people have chosen the option to care for their parents at home even if they have had to give up their jobs as in the case of oral memoir respondents (Nos 37, 42, 52, 54). They chose this option because they did not want their parents having to suffer in the nursing home but especially because they did not want to be seen as not fulfilling their duty towards their parents as loyal sons or daughters. This arrangement had proven not to be the ideal solution in many cases as it often put lots of pressure on the whole family for a long period of time. It is believed that the Vietnamese elderly would be happier if they were cared for in a culturally appropriate nursing home environment. Therefore, the Vietnamese communities all over Australia have been planning to establish specific nursing homes with staff members who can speak Vietnamese and who can provide culturally appropriate food and other services to those Vietnamese elderly who need nursing care. Such projects are also considered by the Vietnamese community in France but would be harder to realize in France because the French government, so far, has not been as supportive as the Australian government.

It is not entirely accurate to say that all elderly Vietnamese are unhappy living in Australia or in France. There are stories in the community where elderly couples have found happiness and joy living with or near their children and grandchildren. They were able to accept the reality of life in the host country. They tried to learn the language of the host country, participated in their children's life by helping them in some day to day tasks such as minding the grandchildren, teaching them Vietnamese language and culture, and taking them to the nearby kindergarten and primary schools while their parents are at work. Those who were able establish their life in this way felt happier and more confident that they still had a significant role to play in the life of their children and grandchildren. The role of elderly parents and grandparents was in fact considered by many oral memoir respondents both in France and in Australia as vital to the family life

in the host country. Elderly parents of these respondents had always been treated with care, love and respect by their children and grandchildren. Their presence in the family still inspired reverence and enhanced family unity; they still very much symbolised the family spirit. Grandparents' most important role in the family outside of Vietnam was to help in the transmission and maintenance of Vietnamese language and culture to their grandchildren as previously discussed in Chapter 7.

Because they did not know the language of the host country, most elderly parents were not able to establish a deep level of oral communication through that language with neighbours and people in the wider community but with their generous hospitality and friendly manners, expressed through non-verbal communication means (eg: gestures), they were able to establish meaningful and lasting friendships with their neighbours. Real communion and genuine human relationships can be expressed in a variety of ways and language is only one of them.

Being aware of the needs of the elderly, the Vietnamese communities in France and in Australia established networks of support through community organisations such as the Vietnamese elderly associations. These associations provided the elderly with opportunities to learn the host language, to learn about the customs and traditions of the host country and, most importantly, to create an appropriate environment for the elderly to meet, to talk and to recreate together as a group so that they did not feel so isolated. Although these activities did not fulfill all the social and emotional needs of the elderly, they helped to lessen their anxiety and to build their confidence and self-esteem, as well as establishing strong connections and friendships among themselves and beyond to the host society.

## **Family Conflicts**

Restrictions, unreasonable expectations and parents' lack of understanding and openness towards their children, especially when they reached their teenage years, had resulted in a number of sad family situations among the respondents where children left home and became drug addicts or formed ethnic gangs as a protest against their parents' strict discipline. This extreme situation was not so obvious among parents in the oral memoir contributors' group from France but at least three parents (Nos 32, 34, 37) among the oral memoir respondents from Australia reported that they had to deal with such difficult situations. This by no means implied that family conflict did not exist in France. On the



contrary, family conflict was equally as strong in France as in Australia and the main causes of family friction seemed to originate from generational and cultural gaps. Evidence showed that many Vietnamese parents living in France and in Australia still wanted to educate their children the same way in which they had been raised by their parents in Vietnam.

Conflicts arose when parents tried to hang on to the traditional family values while children decided to fully embrace the Western way of living and thinking and neither party was prepared to compromise in order to create a blending of the two cultures as expressed in the following memoir from a second generation Vietnamese in Australia.

*My life at home is fairly difficult as I have contrasting views, morals and beliefs to those of my parents and the "upper" generations. Most of the things that I believe in, contradict my parents, resulting in constant debate and disagreement. I seriously can't stand some of the ethics that Confucius has brought but I have to accept them for I am part of the Vietnamese culture.*

*(W. Memoir 3, Y 10 student, born in Australia)*

This respondent expressed her frustration when her parents expected her to follow the moral principles derived from Confucianism called *tam tông* and *tứ đức* or four cardinal virtues namely *công* [proper work], *dung* [proper demeanour], *ngôn* [proper speech] and *hạnh* [proper manners]. Any virtuous woman would need to practice these qualities during her whole life.

Vietnamese parents from France as well as those from Australia agreed that parents and children often found themselves in conflict with each other because of their differences in family values and ways of thinking.

*Vâng, gia đình đổ vỡ càng ngày càng nhiều. Đó là cái lý do của nhiều sự đổ vỡ ở trong gia đình mà bố mẹ thì lớn tuổi còn con cái thì quá trẻ lại được sự giáo dục bên này nhiều và ở trong gia đình không có giữ cái tiếng nói, truyền thống, phong tục Việt Nam thành ra các em nó nghĩ là tất cả những gì của Việt Nam đều là xấu hết và nó theo Tây hoàn toàn. Mà khi đã theo Tây thì nó sẽ không chấp nhận cái ý tưởng của bố mẹ và đổ vỡ ngay.*

*Yes, family break-up happens more and more. The main reason causing family conflict is the fact that parents are old and out of touch, while children are educated here differently, and they don't keep the Vietnamese language, customs and traditions in their family. In such family environments children tend to think that everything Vietnamese is bad and everything French is good. Therefore, they choose to immerse themselves completely in the French way of life and in doing so they often find themselves in conflict with their parents' ways of thinking and living. Constant conflicts can lead to family break-ups.*

*(O. Memoir 9, male, born 1957, arrived in France 1980)*

*Q: Some Vietnamese parents find it hard to raise their teenage children. Did you experience such difficulties?*

*A: Yes, I did.*

*Q: Is that because of differences in cultures and thinking?*

*A: Yes, because parents think differently, and children grow up in a different environment. I think it is mainly because of the conflict between the two cultures. (O. Memoir 30, female, born 1954, arrived in Australia 1981)*

When family conflicts happened, parents saw them as the consequence of the Western cultural influence on their children. They often blamed the host society for a lack of moral values and too much freedom bestowed on children. Family conflicts happen all the time, in every culture and in every country. The important thing is how people resolve family conflicts when they arise. For the Vietnamese, it seems that the concept of *hoa thuan*, or 'harmony and unity in family relationships' which forms the basis of the family's moral code, has helped each member to reflect more carefully on the consequence of their behavior and to find ways of resolving conflicts. In practice, this often means that each individual is required to suppress independent desires in order to maintain a cooperative and unified family. The value of agreement and solidarity provides for many Vietnamese, a sense of security, but for others, a sense of constraint and enormous obligation. The pressure on individuals in a family to promote and protect congenial coexistence often depends on a strict hierarchy within the family, a system of inequitable power relations often replicated throughout society in Vietnam and to a certain degree in the host countries, forming a key element of Vietnamese cultural life.

### ***Family as Agent for Integration***

The family is seen by many Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese alike as a vital factor contributing to the process of successful integration of Vietnamese immigrants into the life of the host society in countries such as USA, Canada, France and Australia. Christian Jelen's study (1993) showed that the secret of successful integration of the Vietnamese into the French society was indeed their family structure and relationships "le secret des succès vietnamienne repose sur une structure familiale qui s'avère être un remarquable creuset d'intégration" (Jelen, 1993:160). She recognised that this family structure was firmly based on Confucian traditions "La famille, inspiré par des traditions confucéenne et mandarinale place l'instruction et les performances scolaires des enfants au centre de ses préoccupations" (Jelen, 1993:160). This family model gave the utmost importance to academic success and, therefore, put children's scholastic performances at the centre of family activities. Vietnamese parents have often been criticized for their strict discipline,

their overprotective behaviour and especially their academic ambitions for their children, but these Vietnamese parents did achieve their dreams. Many studies (Caplan et al 1982, Lê Hữu Khoa 1985, Nguyễn Xuân Thu 1993, Ninnes 1993, Jelen 1993 and Thomas 1999) showed that academic and professional achievements of the Vietnamese, especially those of the second generation living in USA, Canada, France and Australia have largely depended on the support of their parents and other members of their extended family unit.

Oral memoir evidence showed that there were many outstanding success stories among the families of respondents in France, as well as in Australia, as a result of parents' total devotion and support for their children while they were in school and even during their university years. Many Vietnamese parents wanted their children to study in the medical field, and that they would do everything to persuade their children to enter this field of study, even to the extent of forcing them to repeat Year 12 examination in order to obtain the required entry marks.

The most remarkable story illustrating this situation is that of V's family (Oral memoir respondent 45). In 1980, Mr and Mrs V with eight children aged 2-12 arrived in South Australia as refugees with absolutely nothing. They were lucky to meet a generous Catholic priest who gave them shelter in a parish house for a nominal rent of \$1 a month. In order to support their children's education, Mrs V first worked day and night in a small sewing business owned by a Vietnamese friend. She earned a humble amount of money each week, just enough to buy food to feed a big family of ten plus her elderly mother. But she learnt the trade quickly and later on opened her own sewing business in her garage. Her husband on the other hand, devoted his entire time to their children's study during the week, and at weekends he went to a nearby farm to buy cheap second grade eggs then resold them in the market to make some profit. That was the way in which they raised and saved money for their children's education over a period of 23 years. As they knew little English, they could not help their children with homework but made sure that the older and brighter ones helped the younger ones and that all the homework was completed before going to bed each night. Mr and Mrs V's only aim in life was for all of their children to become professionals in the medical field, indeed their dream came through when the youngest son graduated from the medical school with distinction in 2003. He had passed his Year 12 examination a few years earlier with outstanding results (full marks 20/20 for all five subjects).

All of their eight children have been very successful in their academic performance and their career paths. The eldest son, and son no 5, are dentists; son no 2, and daughter no 6, are pharmacists and each now owns their own pharmacy; daughter no 7 and son no 8 are doctors (the youngest is now training as an eye specialist); daughter no 3 and daughter no 5 are nurses. They are all in the medical field, as their parents had wanted them to be. Three of them are now married but only one moved interstate with her husband, the rest are in South Australia. Although each now owns their own home and surgery or pharmacy, they hardly stay in their own home; after work, they still go to their parents' housing trust home to have a meal together as a family almost every day.

The parents no longer needed to work and they wanted to devote their time taking care of two grandchildren and sometimes helped in the pharmacy shops. V Pharmacy is at one end of an Adelaide Road, V Medical Centre is at the other end. When asked in the interview, as parents how they contributed to their children's success, Mrs V replied "Our children's success is much unexpected. It is a blessing from God" and Mr V added "It is also a blessing from God that our children have always listened to us and strictly followed our advice; sometimes it was very difficult to convince them of what was good for them. For example, when our second son finished high school, at first, he did not want to follow our advice, he chose to study medical radiation, but halfway through the course, he changed to pharmacy to please us. Now he is so successful being a pharmacist, owning his own pharmacy. The same thing happened to our daughter no 6. She wanted to do Arts but we thought it would be silly of her wasting her time studying something that would not enable her to get a job at the end. She cried for three days when we asked her to study medicine instead. We then promised her that she would be allowed to study Arts after she had successfully completed her medical degree". Then with a smile Mr V interrupted his wife "Now with a medical degree she earns a lot of money, she no longer talks about her Arts degree".

When Mr and Mrs V were asked to explain how their children were able to establish themselves so quickly, and how they had enough money to build such big properties. Mrs V responded with a sense of pride "Our children are very supportive of each other. It was our family rules that they would try to save and put all the money together in the first few years of their professional life so that we could have a big pool of money to build or to buy property for each of them as needed. We taught them to live with each other, and for each other, and most importantly to obey their parents and grandparents

and they are still doing it now. Our family has always functioned as a collective unit not as individuals and I believe this is the secret of our children's success".

This story is one of many success stories among memoir respondents' families in Australia (Nos 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 29, 31, 37, 38, 41, 51, 53) and in France (Nos 1, 3, 6, 8, 10, 11). Evidence from their memoirs show that there are some common elements in all of these success stories. These elements are closely related to the family traditions that Vietnamese people uphold from generation to generation such as discipline, love of learning, hard work, self-sacrifice, respect for the elders' wisdom, and the pride they have for their family. The most important factor is no doubt the devotion and commitment of the parents to their children's education. Many families in this study proved that they had done that very well for themselves and their children.

### ***Family as an Agent for Culture Transmission and Maintenance***

As discussed above, the family, as a primary group system, in which relationships are usually close and enduring, is generally recognised as the most critical site of language and cultural maintenance in the process of the immigrants' cultural adaptation in the host countries (Clyde, 1991; Fisher, 1964; Smolicz, 1979 & 1984). In the Vietnamese case, the importance of the family, and its vital role in the integration process of the Vietnamese immigrants in France and Australia was obvious, as illustrated in the examples discussed in the previous sections of this Chapter.

Results of the questionnaire asking respondents to rate the importance of the family in their life, which are presented in *Table 8.1* below, indicate that the number of those who considered family life as *very important* was exceptionally high (85-94%) across all three groups. Those rating family life as *not important* to them were negligible in all three groups of respondents (1-2%). However, the comparison of the rating across the three groups presented in *Table 8.1* below shows that the degree of importance of the family was (7-9%) greater among the two groups of respondents from Australia compared to those from France.

*Table 8. 1 Importance of the Family*

	Very import		Rel import		Not import		Total	
Respondents	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
QF group	51	85	8	13	1	2	60	100
QAA group	151	94	7	4	2	1	160	100
QAY group	165	92	14	8	1	1	180	100

It is recognised that the effectiveness of the family as an agency of cultural maintenance and transmission is governed by a number of factors. Some of these, including linguistic usage within the home and parental attitudes towards language maintenance were discussed in Chapters 5 & 7. The intention here is to focus more on the influence of ideological values of the family, i.e. on the broader cultural characteristics, which may have same bearing on the effectiveness of the family as an instrument of culture transmission and maintenance. The theoretical basis for discussion here is Smolicz' distinction between 'individualist' and 'collectivist' ideological values as presented in *Table 8.2* below.

*Table 8. 2 Ideological Orientations and Social Systems in Different Societies*

Social System	Anglo Societies	Ethnic (South and East European Societies)
Primary	Individualist	Collectivist
Secondary	Collectivist	Individualist

*Source: Smolicz (1979: 157)*

The relative influences of these two orientations on social systems in general were discussed in Chapter 3. Smolicz's studies showed that the collectivist ethos of certain non-Anglo ethnic groups from South and East European societies (e.g. Greek and Italian), encouraged a far greater degree of cohesion than that which was found amongst Anglo-Celtic societies. At the same time, it was conducive to the construction of the in-group kin and friendship networks, with endogamous marriage trends as an important consequence. Although it is recognised that in plural societies, collectivist ideological values are vulnerable to attrition and compromise, they are nevertheless more likely to promote group cohesion than the individualistic ethos at the primary level in Anglo-Celtic societies (Smolicz 1979).

## Family Cohesion among the Respondents

As discussed above, the Vietnamese family structure is essentially an extended family structure with a strong collectivist ideological value system. Certainly the evidence of this study shows that, although the structure of the Vietnamese family, both in Australia

and France, has been modified considerably to suit the living environment of the receiving society, many of the collective values of the family are still highly regarded by respondents across all three groups of respondents. It was also recognised that the main source of family conflicts was caused by the duality of these two opposing ideological orientations: individualism versus collectivism, between those who wanted individual freedom and those who wanted to protect the collective values of the family. However, the cohesion of the Vietnamese family seemed to remain strong through its relationships, its customs and traditions, its network of mutual support, its marriage patterns and its close connections with other family members in Vietnam. All of these aimed to promote and nurture collective values instead of individualistic values and therefore they become important elements in the process of culture maintenance and transmission for the Vietnamese as a distinctive group in Australia and in France.

The question of how family structures, and relationships, as they evolved in the host society, contributed to the maintenance or erosion of family values, has been discussed previously in this Chapter and in Chapter 7 in relation to the language maintenance issue. Thus, in the following section, the focus of discussion is on the three remaining aspects of family life, namely, its marriage patterns, its traditions and celebrations and, finally, its connections with family members in Vietnam. The main purpose here is to examine, in the light of the data obtained from oral and written memoirs, as well as questionnaire responses, the effect of these three aspects of family life on the transmission of family collective values and consequently, the transmission of Vietnamese cultural life to future generations of Vietnamese in the host countries France and Australia.

## **Marriage Patterns**

Data on the marital status of the respondents from Chapter 4 (*Table 4.1 and Chart 4.2*) show that out of 340 respondents from Australia, 119 were married at the time. It has been noted that 117 of them had a Vietnamese partner and two had a partner of Chinese background. Most of these respondents were married in Vietnam, with only a small number married in Australia. It has been noted that during the period from 2005-2009, another ten respondents in this group have married. All of them belonged to generation 1.5 who came to Australia with their parents at a very young age. Nine out of ten cases involved Vietnamese men marrying women, while one female respondent (QAY No 3) married a man of Chinese background. But one of the conditions she required from her

Chinese boyfriend was that he learnt Vietnamese so that he could communicate with her parents and other members of her extended family. He had fulfilled his promise before they got married two years ago and they are now expecting a baby girl. Among these ten recently married respondents, two male respondents went to Vietnam with their parents to choose their spouses, brought them to Australia as fiancées, then got married not long after that. It is interesting to note that these two men were brothers; they were quite young, educated in Australia and they presently work full time as successful engineers in South Australia. They explained that the reason for this choice was that they preferred women with real Vietnamese characteristics and qualities. So far there had been no mixed marriages between a Vietnamese and a person of Anglo-Australian background among the respondents from Australia.

Results presented in *Table 4.1, Chapter 4* also revealed that out of 60 questionnaire respondents from France (QF group) 29 were married at the time and only one (QF No 4) was married to a Frenchman. This respondent married her husband in Vietnam in the early 1950's, toward to the end of the French occupation period. The other 28 respondents have Vietnamese marriage partners and most of them married in Vietnam. Among thirteen oral memoir respondents from France, four married in France and all of them married Vietnamese women living in France. Thus, the marriage pattern emerging among the respondents so far was clearly in-group. The most prominent combination was between two Vietnamese persons of the same religion, and with similar social and educational backgrounds. The next most commonly found combination was between a Vietnamese and a person of Asian background such as Chinese or Cambodian. Mixed marriage between a Vietnamese person and a person of Western culture was still rare among the Vietnamese immigrants of first and generation 1.5 but the question of whether this pattern of in-group marriage continues in the second and future generations of Vietnamese living outside Vietnam remains unclear. It is worth exploring this question in the light of comments from memoir respondents, expressing their views in relation to this question in the following section.

### Marriage Intentions

“Cha mẹ đặt đâu con ngồi đó” is a Vietnamese popular saying which literally means that “you have to sit wherever your parents let you” but symbolically it means that it is your duty as pious son or daughter to accept whomever your parents choose for you as a marriage partner. This saying expresses total parental control over the choice of marriage



partner for their children in the Vietnamese society. Arranged marriage was a common practice in the past. In Vietnamese society today, parents still exercise a powerful influence on their children's marriage arrangements. Living in the host society, parents feel that they have lost this authority completely so they ironically turn the saying the other way around, "Con đặt đâu cha mẹ ngồi đó" [sit wherever your children leave you]. In other words, in the context of France and Australia, parents no longer have control over their children's marriage matters.

The analysis of memoirs and observational data show that the majority of parents in France and in Australia have come to terms with this new reality. They have learnt to respect their children's freedom of choice and therefore, they must let their sons or daughters choose their friends or marriage partners. With regard to the choice of marriage partner, parents now only play an advisory role and the final decision rests entirely with the son or daughter concerned. This view can be summarised in the following extracts of memoirs.

*Về vấn đề chọn lựa một người bạn hay xa hơn là chọn người bạn trăm năm tiến tới việc thành lập một gia đình thì em cũng theo quan niệm mới của nhiều gia đình ngày nay để cho con cái lựa chọn bạn trăm năm của chúng. Tuy nhiên em cũng luôn theo dõi và góp ý mỗi khi chúng quen một người bạn và đặc biệt là những người bạn thân mà chúng muốn tiến đến hôn nhân.*

*With regard to friends or marriage partners, I adopt the modern view that many Vietnamese families hold today. I leave my children totally free to choose whoever they like. However, I always give them my support and advice when they befriend a new person, especially when they form relationships with those they intend to marry (O. Memoir 37, male, born 1951, arrived in Australia 1980)*

This respondent was a young widow with three children, two boys and one girl. Since the interview her eldest daughter has married a Vietnamese man of her own choice. Before they became husband and wife, they knew each other first as friends for many years through the youth group in the Vietnamese Catholic community. The father had told the researcher earlier that he was extremely happy because his eldest daughter had been happily married to a Vietnamese man of the same religion and whose family he also knew well. He was hoping that his two sons would follow the example of their older sister. An even more broad-minded view is given below.

*I don't really worry much if my children later on choose to marry non-Vietnamese people. I think that is normal because they are living in a Western culture. This culture is about freedom of choice. We have to respect that. As long as the children are heading in the right direction, then it is fine. We cannot impose the Vietnamese view and ways of life on them in this country. It will be very difficult.*

*Although I still hope in my heart that they would marry Vietnamese people, that is not for me to decide.*

*(O. Memoir 31, male, born 1945, arrived in Australia 1986)*

Memoir respondent 31 was a teacher of Vietnamese in Australian high schools. He got married in Australia to a Vietnamese woman who was also a teacher of Vietnamese. They now have three young children and they both were very keen for their children to maintain the Vietnamese language and culture. However, he did not worry about the fact that his children could one day marry people of non-Vietnamese background. He considered this situation a normal course of life when you live in a country like Australia and that he had no right to impose his Vietnamese way of life on his children.

Evidence showed that while respecting their children's freedom of choice, both of the above parents, like many other parents in Australia, deep in their hearts, still hoped that their children would marry people of Vietnamese background. They seemed to believe that that was the best way to protect the stability and cohesion of the Vietnamese family system. The same desire was expressed by almost all parents among the respondents in France.

Some parents in France thought that French culture and French language would not be the real barriers of communication for them because they were familiar with this language and culture but they still felt sad if their children chose to marry French people. But in no way would they interfere in their children's decision as expressed in the following memoir extract by a mother of two girls who had been settled well as a professional woman in France for more than forty years.

*Nếu người Việt nam lấy Tây cũng không có gì cản trở cả vì cảm nghĩ và văn hóa của họ cũng tương tự như mình. Đối với em nếu con em lấy Tây thì em buồn lắm. Tuy nhiên vì mình ở đây lâu nên em cũng có sự dân chủ là nếu chúng nó yêu thì mình không thể cản trở được và em cũng đành chấp nhận thôi.*

*If the Vietnamese married French people I don't think that we would have difficulty in understanding each other in terms of our thinking and culture. But if my daughters married Frenchmen, I would feel very sad. However, because I have been living here so long, I should respect their freedom and if they really love each other then I should not interfere, and I would reluctantly accept the situation for the sake of my daughters.*

*(O. Memoir 11, female, born 1948, arrived in France 1966)*

The preference for in-group marriage was expressed clearly through twenty-five out of thirty (83%) oral memoir respondents from Australia and ten out of ten memoir

respondents (100%) from France who were in the parent category. The main reason behind this preference was the belief that marriage between two people having the same culture and language, with the same family value system would help the couple to understand each other better and consequently, they would have a better chance to succeed in their married life than those in culturally mixed marriages. This view is illustrated by the following extracts of memoirs.

*Sự liên kết trong hôn nhân càng có nhiều điểm tương đồng thì càng có cơ hội kết hợp chặt chẽ và yêu thương bền lâu hơn. Nếu hôn nhân nào có nhiều cái cùng giống nhau như, cùng ngôn ngữ, cùng tôn giáo, cùng hoàn cảnh, cùng môi trường và trình độ của đời sống thì chắc chắn sẽ có sát xuất gắn bó lâu bền hơn là chỉ có rất ít những cái cùng.*

*In my opinion, a marriage relationship with more compatible elements will have a better chance to succeed. For instance, two people having the same language, same religion, same family background and same educational level would have a better chance to develop a marriage relationship which is more intimate and lasting than those who share very few points in common.*

*(O. Memoir 37, male, born 1951, arrived in Australia 1980)*

*Em vẫn ước mong con em lập gia đình với người Việt nam là cùng dòng máu, em không có quan niệm kì thị, vì khi cùng dòng máu với nhau thì dễ hiểu nhau hơn, có một điều gì đó mà không thể giải thích được, nhưng không có nghĩa là tuyệt đối vì có những cặp khác văn hóa và dòng máu họ vẫn hạnh phúc suốt đời..*

*I have always wished that my children will one day marry Vietnamese, people of the same blood. I don't mean to discriminate against other people, but I believe that two people having the same culture can understand each other better. This is true but difficult for me to explain. However, I do recognise that there are successful mixed marriages where the couples are very happy together and their marriage lasts a life time.*

*(O. Memoir 24, female, born 1976, arrived in Australia 1991)*

*Cá nhân tôi thì dĩ nhiên muốn nó lập gia đình với người Việt Nam hơn tại vì ở đây cho dù mình nói tiếng của họ nhưng mà những cái phong tục tập quán của họ mình không thể nào theo được.*

*Personally, I prefer my children to marry the Vietnamese because, although we live here and can speak their language (French) we still cannot fully follow many of their customs and traditions.*

*(O. Memoir 9, male, born 1957, arrived in France 1980)*

There was a small number of parents in France and in Australia who believed that mixed-marriages were not only natural but also desirable because it showed that Vietnamese people were not prejudiced against people from a different culture. This view is presented by the following extracts of memoirs.

*Q: Trong tương lai nếu các con của em nó lập gia đình với người không phải là người Việt thì đối với em thế nào?*

*What is your attitude if in the future your children married people from a different culture?*

*A: Một khi đã sống trong một cái nước tự do thì tại sao mình lại ngăn cản?*

*We are living in a free country, why should we interfere in our children's freedom of choice?*

*Q: Tức là con em có thể lấy người thuộc sắc tộc nào cũng được?*

*That means you would allow your sons to marry people from any culture?*

*A: Dạ. Nhưng nếu là sắc tộc người Châu Âu hay là Mỹ Châu chẳng hạn như người Pháp, người Đức thì chắc phải dạy thêm cho con cái mình và cắt nghĩa cho người phối ngẫu của con về cái phong tục, tập quán của mình tức là phải biết kính trọng bậc trên.*

*Yes, of course, but if they married people from Europe or America such as a French or a German then I would teach my children and require them to explain to their spouses about our Vietnamese customs and traditions; for example, they need to respect the elders according to our culture.*

*(O. Memoir 1, female, born 1963, arrived in France 1984)*

It appeared that this respondent was happy for their children to marry people from other cultures, with the condition that they learn to live according to the Vietnamese culture, but she did not mention whether her family members, including herself, would be willing to learn the cultures of their future sons and daughters-in-laws.

In all, seven parents (23%) (O. Memoirs. Nos 26, 30, 40, 41, 45, 46, 53) among thirty memoir respondents who were in the parents' category from Australia, expressed a similar view. Their argument was that if you were integrated fully into Australian society and you expect other people to accept your culture, then you should also accept people from other cultures into your family.

*Nếu bây giờ mình đã hội nhập vào xã hội Úc thì mình cũng chấp nhận cái chuyện nhận một đứa con dâu hay con rể không phải là người Việt nam vào gia đình của mình, hình thức đó cũng như trao đổi hai chiều, văn hóa của mình hội nhập với người ta thì cũng để cho người ta hội nhập với mình, trong tâm thức của mình thì mình vẫn muốn một đứa con dâu hay rể cùng dòng máu và bản sắc của mình thì sẽ dễ dàng hơn trong vấn đề ứng xử*

*Now that you have integrated into the Australian society you should willingly accept into your family your daughters or sons-in-laws who are not Vietnamese. This is one of the ways through which you can show that integration calls for a mutual exchange of cultures. However, deep down in your heart, you always want your daughters or sons-in-laws to have the same cultural background of your own because this would help to build better understanding and forge relationships among members of the family.*

*(O. Memoir 26, female, born 1952, arrived in Australia 1985)*

In fact, three (O. Memoirs. Nos 45, 46, 53) out of these five parents already had the experience of having children in mixed marriages. These parents saw that mixed marriages could bring some benefit to their family because culturally they could become richer for it, but they also had to cope with communication problems arising from cultural and linguistic differences. These parents could not speak English well and their sons and daughters-in-law could not speak Vietnamese. When these families got together speaking Vietnamese only, their sons and daughters-in-laws felt completely left out and alienated.

Evidence from memoirs showed clear differences in attitudes and thinking between the parents and children regarding the choice of a marriage partner. Most young memoir respondents from Australia and from France considered that it was most important for them to have the freedom to marry someone that they loved regardless of their cultural background. The main language and culture that they share together would naturally be the language and culture of the host country where they were born and brought up.

However, it has been noted that preference for in-group marriage was relatively strong among the oral memoir respondents of second generation in Australia. Four (O.Memoir. Nos 15, 17, 20, 21) out of nine (45%) respondents in this category stated that they would not mind marrying people from a different culture but still preferred to marry a Vietnamese person as illustrated by the following extracts from memoirs.

*Preferably, I would choose my marriage partner from the Vietnamese community rather than the European community because I want my children to be Vietnamese and carry on our family traditions of being Vietnamese.*

*(O. Memoir 20, male, Y 12 student, born in Australia)*

It did not surprise the researcher when O.Memoir respondent 20 said that he would prefer to marry a person from the Vietnamese community as this respondent came from a very traditional family where the parents have strict control over the children. His parents often expressed their view to the researcher that they wanted their children to keep both the Catholic faith and the Vietnamese family traditions as well. According to them, one of the most practical ways to realise their wishes was to encourage and to provide the opportunity for their children to meet Vietnamese people within the Catholic community environment and eventually to marry Catholic Vietnamese people. It has been noted that all of the eleven children from this family have been heavily involved in different groups of the Vietnamese Catholic community in South Australia. This indeed has provided them with lots of opportunities to meet other Vietnamese young people. So far it has worked quite well for the two oldest. Both have married their Vietnamese friends who

had participated in the same choir and each family has three children. Thus, they have fulfilled their own wishes, as well as those of their parents. O.Memoir respondent 20 is the second youngest in the family and it is more than likely that he will follow in the same family tradition.

*Personally, and honestly, I'd prefer to marry someone who is Vietnamese because I can communicate well with him and I don't have to change the way I live. If I were to marry someone from a different culture, it would mean that we would have to share differences and cultures. This could be an advantage, but I would still prefer marrying a Vietnamese person.*

*(O. Memoir 21, female, Y 12 student, born in Australia)*

Oral memoir respondent 21 stated that one of the reasons for her to prefer marrying a Vietnamese person was that she could communicate well with her spouse. This respondent being born and educated in Australia, should not have difficulty speaking English with her spouse. However, coming from a Vietnamese family background, she was not confident that she could understand and share with her husband from a different culture at the deepest level. She did recognise the value of sharing life with someone from a different culture. However, she realised that for the marriage to work well both partners, as well as their respective families, must be willing to change in order to embrace fully the other person's way of life and culture. This respondent was not sure that she wanted or had the capacity to do that. She preferred to continue the family life that she had known best in her own family.

*Q: If you met someone who's from a different culture, would you consider marrying this person?*

*A: I guess so. But I prefer a Vietnamese person and with the same religion.*

*Q: Why would you prefer someone with the same religion?*

*A: My parents are really strict with traditions and if a fiance wasn't of the same religion he would be forced to change, so he'd be better off if they were of the same religion.*

*(O. Memoir 17, female, Y 12 student, born in Australia)*

O. Memoir respondent 17 reported that she would prefer to marry a Vietnamese person with the same religion because she felt strongly that her parents would not let her marry someone who was not Catholic unless that person became a Catholic. This respondent was right, as it is very rare that Vietnamese Catholic parents would allow their children to marry people who are not Catholic. Being Catholic is the primary condition that Vietnamese Catholic parents would require from their children when they choose their partners in marriage. This view was expressed strongly by all memoir respondents in this category. Buddhist parents seemed less strict on this point. Observational data showed that both here and in Vietnam many Buddhist parents are happy for their children to convert to Catholicism when they married a Catholic person. The Catholic faith is seen

by Vietnamese Catholics and non-Catholics alike as a positive belief system, protecting the stability of married life as it teaches loyalty and faithfulness between husband and wife. It forbids adultery and divorce, whereas other religions in Vietnam are not as strict on these matters. One must bear in mind that polygamy was a common form of marriage in Vietnam up to the recent past and certainly faithfulness on the part of the husband was not required in a marriage contract. There is a Vietnamese saying that some Vietnamese men still like to quote in order to justify their adulterous behaviour: “trai tài lấy năm lấy bảy, gái chính chuyên chỉ có một chồng” (Toan Ánh, 1969: 360) which could be translated as “a noble man can marry five or seven wives but a virtuous woman must only have one husband”.

It appeared that all three of these respondents came from families where parents have had a great deal of influence on their children. Their family structure and relationships are based on a strong network of mutual support and dependence on each other. They were taught to respect their parents' wishes in many aspects of their life, especially in relation to their choice of marriage partners. They considered their happiness in marriage as closely linked with the whole extended family. This view was not found among the two memoir respondents of a similar age-group in France.

## **Marriage Celebrations**

Marriage is a very significant event in the family life, as well as the community life of Vietnamese people living overseas. In the Vietnamese traditional society, marriage between two people was marked by at least four different ceremonies indicating different stages of commitments between the two families towards the final step of marriage, which is the wedding ceremony (Toan Ánh, 1969: 337- 345). The ritual, called “Lễ chạm ngõ”, is the first ceremony which takes place when parents from both sides have agreed for their children to move towards a possible marriage in the near future. This is a simple ritual where the parents of the groom are required to bring a tray of gifts consisting of betel nuts, betel leaves, tea and wine, to the bride's family asking permission for the bride to meet her future husband face-to-face. One must remember that in the past marriage was purely an arrangement between the two families and in many cases the young couple concerned had never met each other before. After “Lễ chạm ngõ” comes “Lễ ăn dặm”. This ritual happens when the bride's family sends a message to the groom's family through a mediator indicating that they are ready for the next step. In this ceremony the

groom's family once again brings gifts to the bride's family and, in return, they request the birth certificate of the bride in order to match it with that of the groom to see whether the young couple are compatible with each other according to the Vietnamese horoscope and, if they are, a date will be chosen for their marriage. After “Lễ ăn giã” comes the engagement (Lễ hỏi) and finally the wedding (Lễ cưới). Many families in Vietnam today, as well as those in Australia and in France, only keep the two main ceremonies, namely, the engagement and the wedding. It has been noted that in the actual celebration of these two events many old customs are no longer practiced in Australia or in France. Brief accounts of the engagement and the wedding as they have happened in the Vietnamese community in Australia, and similarly in France, are reported in the following section. These are based on the researcher's participant observation experiences in both communities.

**Engagement Ceremony.** It has been observed that Vietnamese families living outside of Vietnam in countries such as Australia, France or USA celebrate this event much more simply than those in Vietnam. It is usually celebrated in the home of the bride to be, in front of the ancestors' altar where family members from both sides gather together to witness the couple exchange their engagement rings and to pray for blessings upon the engaged couple from the supreme being of their respective beliefs (God or Buddha) and from the ancestors. For this occasion, the groom's family brings gifts of fruits, teas, wine and a roast pig as offerings to be put on the altar. By accepting these offerings, the bride's family officially says to the groom's family, as well as their relatives and friends, that they have definitely agreed to give their daughter away in marriage to the groom's family. For this occasion, the groom usually wears the Western suit and the bride wears the Vietnamese traditional costume called “Áo dài” as shown in the picture below.

*[All photos used in the following pages have been used with the consent of the people concerned.]*



*Picture 8. 1 A Couple in their Engagement Costume*



### Wedding Celebration

The wedding ceremony has the purpose of announcing publicly the marriage between a man and a woman to family members, relations, friends and acquaintances. According to the Vietnamese traditions, parents usually choose the date which is considered the best day for the wedding to take place, according to the lunar calendar. But now, living in the host country, the couple often choose the date themselves, depending on their work situation and the availability of the priest/monk who conducts the religious ceremony for them. A Vietnamese wedding in Australia or in France usually consists of three main parts. It starts with “Lễ nghênh hôn or Lễ gia tiên” in the morning, followed by a religious ceremony in the afternoon, and concludes with a reception in the evening.

**Lễ Nghênh Hôn.** This ceremony is also called “Lễ gia tiên”. It is basically a rite to pay homage to ancestors and to express gratitude to the parents of the couple. On the morning of the wedding day, the groom together with his family come to the bride’s family home to ask for permission to take the bride to his family home. The procession to the bride’s family is led by the groom’s parents and the elderly, followed by relatives and friends carrying gifts such as cakes, dry tea leaves, betel leaves, areca nuts, fruits, a roast pig and jewellery for the bride. All the gifts are wrapped in red cellophane or covered with red or yellow silk which symbolises luck and happiness. In the living-room of the bride’s family, the representative of the groom’s family (usually an elderly man) introduces members of the groom’s family to those of the bride’s. Then, on behalf of the groom’s family, he presents the gifts to the bride’s family as a token of joy and happiness.

*Picture 8. 2 Presenting Gifts to the Bride's Family*



It should be pointed out that in Vietnam the groom's family is required to bring whatever gifts the bride's family requires of them as part of the deal called "thách cưới". Some of these gifts could be a big sum of money, expensive jewellery, clothes, trays of food and sticky rice. If the groom's family do not have the money to buy the required gifts, they have to borrow or negotiate with the bride's family to lower their requirements. As a result of this custom, some couples, after the wedding, have had to work hard for the next ten years to pay off their wedding debts. Thankfully this custom of "thách cưới" is no longer kept among Vietnamese immigrant families in France or in Australia. It is considered inappropriate or even offensive to the woman if these gifts are thought of as being brought to the bride's family in order to buy her, as if they were buying an object.

After the presentation of gifts, the representative of the bride's family guides the couple to the ancestors' altar. The couple pay homage to the ancestors by making four and a half deep bows with lighted incense sticks in their hands, in front of the altar as a sign of gratitude, love and respect for the forebears of the family as illustrated by the following *picture 8.3*

*Picture 8. 3 Couple Paying Homage to their Ancestors*



Then the couple move towards the bride's parents to thank them for the most precious gift of life that they have given to the bride. Next, the couple offer the parents a small cup of tea. This has to be done in a kneeling posture to show respect to the parents. After the tea ceremony, the groom's mother helps the bride put on the jewellery given to her by the groom's parents (usually earrings and necklet). At this point, the bride's mother also gives her gifts such as a necklet or a bracelet as dowry. When this ritual is concluded, the groom's family officially asks permission to take the bride home with them. When the bridal procession arrives at the groom's family home, the same ritual is performed again but this time it is to pay homage to the ancestors of the groom's family and his parents in particular. At the conclusion of "Lễ gia tiên", lunch is served at the groom's family home for all those present.

**Religious Ceremony.** The most important part of the wedding for Vietnamese families who are Catholic, or Buddhist is the religious ceremony which is usually celebrated in the afternoon of the wedding day. Catholic couples always choose to have a nuptial mass celebrated by a priest with the participation of the couple's bridal party, families and friends. In a nuptial mass, the couple publicly and solemnly declare their love and faithfulness to each other forever. They also exchange rings with each other to symbolise their love and faithfulness in marriage. In the church ceremony the bride often wears a white wedding dress in the Western style and the groom wears a Western suit as shown in *picture 8.4* below.

*Picture 8. 4 Couple Exchange Vows in a Catholic Marriage Ceremony*



Some Buddhist couples have their wedding ceremony in a Buddhist temple conducted by a Buddhist monk with the witnessing of both families and friends.

**Wedding Reception.** The final part of the wedding is the wedding reception. In the evening of the wedding day, both the bride's and groom's families together with all their relatives, friends and acquaintances are invited to a wedding reception in a restaurant or a hall. Vietnamese food is served by a special catering group in a banquet style with a fixed menu consisting of at least eight courses. A wedding is considered as a very significant community event, an occasion where parents can display their wealth and their social status in the Vietnamese community by the size of the wedding they organise, and the number of guests present at the wedding reception. Some parents would invite four or five hundred guests to their children's weddings. Relatives and friends come from all over the world, including Vietnam, to be present at this family event.



*Picture 8. 5 Couple with Bridal Party at their Wedding Reception*



*Picture 8. 6 Couple and Parents Greeting Guests at Reception Party*



Young Vietnamese couples today have the tendency to make this event less complicated and more relevant to their life than fitting into their parents' agenda, so they prefer to invite their friends and colleagues to the wedding rather than their parents' friends and acquaintances. In recent times, there have been some couples who wanted to marry according to the Vietnamese traditions but could not understand or speak Vietnamese well, so the ceremonial part of the reception and the liturgy at church/temple have been conducted in two languages (Vietnamese-English/French). It has been noted that Vietnamese weddings in Australia or France have also adopted some elements of the

wedding in the Western culture in the celebration, such as the cutting of the wedding cake (picture 8.7), champagne for the wedding toast (picture 8.8) and dancing.

*Picture 8. 7 Couple Cutting Their Wedding Cake*



*Picture 8. 8 Couple Pouring Champagne for Their Wedding Toast*



Music band with karaoke singing is something which has only been recently introduced as part of the entertainment at the wedding receptions in Australia. All of these changes are obvious signs of the cultural adaptation process of a migrant community where the second generation has a significant group of people who want to shape their own group identity reflecting their greater involvement in mainstream society.

The patterns of maintaining some traditional Vietnamese wedding features, alongside patterns they have learnt from mainstream society is evident in the costumes of the bridal couple on the wedding day. In the old days the bride used to wear a long red silk dress and a red turban, while the groom used to put on a long blue silk dress and a turban of the same colour (see picture 8.3). Nowadays the majority of couples dress according to the Western culture in the wedding ceremony and in the reception. They only wear traditional dresses in “Lễ gia tiên” ceremony to pay homage to the ancestors, grandparents and those who passed away.

Despite the changes, all the Vietnamese families living overseas today still try to preserve the main customs and traditions regarding the wedding. Images of an ancestral altar with lighted candles, shining fruits and the image of a bride in a traditional dress with a turban, all speak powerfully of the efforts of the Vietnamese people to preserve and develop the beauty of the Vietnamese traditions not only for themselves but also for contributing to the richness of the cultural life of the country where they live.

## **Family Traditions and Celebrations**

Apart from wedding celebrations, most overseas Vietnamese would consider Tết (Vietnamese New Year) and ancestor veneration as the most important family celebrations. These are the events that every Vietnamese family observes, regardless of their belief system or their socio-economic background. Almost all the 400 participants in this study reported that their family celebrated Tết every year and that during the course of the year they also remembered “ngày giỗ” or the death anniversary of their parents, grandparents and all deceased members of the family. How and why the Vietnamese maintain these important family traditions in France and in Australia are discussed in the following section.

### ***Tết – Vietnamese New Year.***

Tết or “Tết Nguyên Đán” is the Vietnamese New Year Festival. It is a national holiday celebrated by everyone and all over the country for several days on end. It is a time in which people stop working, enjoy themselves with good food, wine and merry-making and spend time visiting relatives and friends. Tết is celebrated on the first day of the first month of the lunar calendar which varies from year to year between January the 19<sup>th</sup> and February the 20<sup>th</sup>.

Tết is, no doubt, the most important festival for not only the Vietnamese living in Vietnam but also those living overseas. Tết is celebrated to welcome the New Year which is believed to bring about a new and happy chapter in everyone’s life. It is the time of gathering for members of the family who have had to go away from home for work during the year. Thus, many overseas Vietnamese, especially those with parents and grandparents still in Vietnam, often go back to celebrate Tết with their family. Tết is the occasion for all members of the family to gather together in the family home, not only members who are alive but also those who are deceased. It is a popular belief that the spirits of the deceased members of the family will come back to spend the Tết festival with those still alive. Therefore, on the eve of the New Year’s Day, people always perform the rite of offering food before the ancestors’ family altar to invite the spirits of the dead to come home to celebrate Tết with the family.

***Picture 8. 9 Ancestors’ Altar Ready for the Rituals***



This ritual is faithfully observed by almost all Vietnamese families living outside of Vietnam. Even those who do not believe in the existence of the spirit after death still



perform the ceremony as it is an occasion for them and their families to remember those beloved persons who have passed away.

At midnight of the last day of the Lunar New Year, people celebrate Giao Thừa (the transition moment) by a series of firecrackers to welcome the New Year and farewell the old year. Firecrackers are exploded as an expression of joy and happiness and for those who are superstitious, to chase the evil spirits away from their homes. Those who are Christians or Buddhists often go to the church or temple at midnight to pray for blessings upon themselves and members of their families both alive and dead. In Vietnam, there is a custom of picking up burgeoning branches from temple gardens (hái Lộc Xuân) and bringing them home as a symbol of good luck. This custom is still maintained in some Vietnamese Buddhist temples in Australia and France. Some Vietnamese Catholic communities in Australia and France have also replicated this custom by making a cherry blossom tree with bible citations wrapped in red paper hanging on the branches as “Lộc Xuân” for people to pick and take home after the “Giao Thừa” Mass. The bible verse that each person picks is considered as God’s special message for that person to live by throughout the course of the coming year.

*Picture 8. 10 Archbishop Wilson Blesses “Lộc Xuân” Tree -Viet Catholic Community in SA*



Tết is the occasion for people to pay debts, to repair wrongdoings, to forgive and to exchange gifts with family members, relatives and friends and, most importantly, to remember all deceased members of the family. The first day of Tết begins with the ritual offering of food made to the spirits of the ancestors on the family altar. After the ceremony, the children will present New Year wishes to their parents and grandparents,

who will compliment them for being one year older and give them lucky money, usually in a red envelope as shown in the following *picture 8.11* below.

*Picture 8. 11 Red Envelope for Lucky Money Given to Children during Tet*



Young children also expect lucky money to be given to them by their older brothers and sisters, relatives and friends of their parents. In general, Vietnamese people don't celebrate birthdays on the day they were born but Tết is the time for everyone to celebrate their birthday, because everyone becomes one year older on New Year's Day. People spend the second and the third day of Tết visiting relatives, teachers and friends and offering them gifts and best wishes for the New Year. Although various kinds of food are prepared for the festive season, the most typical Tết food is the glutinous rice cake (bánh chưng and bánh tét), meat rolls and candied fruits (mứt).

For Vietnamese people living in host countries such as Australia or France, Tết plays an important part in their family life. All memoir respondents of this study reported that they had faithfully kept the Tết tradition every year in their family and they also wanted to make sure that their children and grandchildren would continue this family tradition into the future. Tết for them is the time for reunion with family members living nearby and also the time when their thoughts are instinctively transported to their native country, town and village where their parents, relatives and friends still live and where their beloved ancestors lie buried, to all those places and people that give a special significance to the Vietnamese New Year Festival.

### ***Ancestor Veneration***

In every home and all temples or pagodas in Vietnam, as well as outside Vietnam one finds an altar dedicated to the ancestors. Although many traditional beliefs and superstitions have vanished in Vietnamese modern society, ancestor veneration continues to exist not only in Vietnam but also in almost all Vietnamese families living overseas. Ancestral veneration is not a superstitious belief; it is a ritual of filial piety. It represents high moral and social significance in the Vietnamese culture. It is a ritual to commemorate each ancestor's anniversary of death within the family. Failing to venerate one's ancestors is considered as an act of grave filial impiety “con bất hiếu” that condemns the ancestors to a life of wandering spirits, going from place to place, living on charity.

The actual ceremony and the food offerings displayed on the family altar may vary slightly according to religious tradition of the family but the intention is the same. In a Buddhist family for example, on the eve of each ancestor's anniversary of death and traditional festival days, various offerings such as bowls of rice, plates of fruits, flowers, wine, tea, and so on, are prepared and presented on the family altar. On the day of anniversary, the relatives of the deceased gather together and the deceased's eldest son presides over the ceremonial food and incense offerings for the dead. He will take three sticks of incense, hold them up to his forehead, and say the invocation to invite the ancestral spirit to receive the offerings and feast. At the same time, they will pray to the ancestors for protection, health, wealth, and familial peace. It is believed that burnt incense will carry the offerings to the other realm for the deceased to partake of, but the living family members consume them as soon as the rituals are completed. Accompanying these offerings is an array of silver and gold spirit money that is transferred to the ancestors in the form of smoke.

In the past, Catholic families were not allowed to practice ancestor worship as it was seen as contradictory to the Catholic faith, which required them to worship God alone. Many Vietnamese found it hard to accept that, while choosing God, they had to renounce their ancestors. Since Vatican II, the Catholic Church has changed its views on many cultural issues such as this. Catholic faith and practices are now more in tune with the culture of its faithful. Catholic families in Vietnam, and those living in host countries such as Australia and France, are encouraged to observe the ancestral ritual as an expression of the spirit of the fourth commandment requiring Catholics to love and respect their parents. On the family altar of a Vietnamese Catholic family, religious icons such as the

cross and/or icons of Mary, Joseph and other saints including the Vietnamese Martyrs are placed high above the pictures of the deceased parents or grandparents. Candles and incense sticks are used in the offering ritual but they don't believe in the burning of paper money to send to the spirits of the ancestors like the Buddhists. On the anniversary of the deceased, Catholic families offer Mass intentions for the deceased and in the evening the whole family gathers together in front of the family altar to pray for the deceased relative to be given eternal life and happiness with God. They also pray to God and to the ancestors for protection, health, and familial peace and unity.

### **Links with Family in Vietnam**

For many overseas Vietnamese living in countries such as USA, Canada, France or Australia, their life in the host country is described as having two faces, one looking forward and one looking back. The pain of separation from home and family still weighs heavily on many and their primary concern is to support and to protect their family members back in Vietnam by sending them money and gifts regularly. They feel that it is their responsibility to help, not only close relatives such as parents, brothers and sisters, but also distant relatives, friends, colleagues or neighbours who are still living at the poverty level, in a country classified as one of the most underdeveloped, corrupt and overpopulated countries in the world. The majority of Vietnamese in Australia and France are deeply concerned about the economic and social conditions in Vietnam and there is continued emphasis on the issues of family reunification and family visits within Vietnamese families in Australia and in France.

Thousands of Vietnamese return to Vietnam each year to visit their relatives and bring with them substantial amounts of money and gifts each time to help their relatives in Vietnam, sometimes at great cost and sacrifice to their own family budget in the host country. According to the office of Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, in the month of October 2007, Vietnam welcomed a total of 332,762 tourists coming into the country and among them, there were 48,043 overseas Vietnamese returning to visit their relatives. In this same month, the total number of tourists coming from France was 12,012 and 18,550 from Australia. Tourism has become an important industry in Vietnam as it helps to create jobs for a number of people and opportunity for cultural exchange with many countries in the world.

Thirty-four out of thirty-nine (87%) oral memoir respondents from Australia and all of the thirteen memoir respondents from France reported that they had returned to Vietnam to visit relatives at least once or twice. Some respondents reported that each time they go to Vietnam they have to spend approximately ten to twenty thousand Australian dollars as gifts to relatives and other poor people in Vietnam. This vast quantity of money and merchandise that travels to Vietnam every month from families living in Australia or France attests to the power of the ongoing relationship Vietnamese people throughout the diasporas have with their relatives in their homeland. Some individuals, especially the elderly, who cannot travel and have not seen relatives in Vietnam for many years constitute their relationship almost entirely in a flow of telephone calls, letters, money and goods. This illustrates clearly that the bond of the Vietnamese family extends beyond the boundaries of a single nation.

It has been noted that there is a trend among young people, those born in Australia or France, as well as those who came to the host country at a very young age, who want to go to Vietnam to see the land of their cultural origins and to establish connections with other members of their extended family for the first time. For this group of people, a visit to Vietnam means the discovery of another aspect of their cultural identity. All of the memoir respondents of the second generation Vietnamese in Australia and in France, who had visited Vietnam, reflected on their experience very positively as illustrated by the response from a Year 12 student, born in Australia, who has been in Vietnam, visiting relatives with her parents.

*Q: Have you ever been to Vietnam?*

*A: Yes, I went to Vietnam once, with my parents when I was very young.*

*Q: Would you like to go back?*

*A: Yes. Mum said that we will go again at the end of this year. I like all the fruit and a lot of my relatives are still in Vietnam, especially my grandpa.*

Three memoir respondents (Nos 51, 52, 53) who reported that they had not been back to Vietnam were leaders of the Vietnamese community in South Australia and very active in the political movement against the human rights abuses and corruption of the communist government of Vietnam. They have not gone back, not because they did not want to connect with or support their family in Vietnam, but because of their political and ideological stand against communism, a system of government which, in their view, had destroyed their beloved country, deprived the people of their freedom, and tainted the cultural heritage and many family traditions that their ancestors and heroes had built for more than four thousand years. They claimed that the communist government had

destroyed all the values of a culture that the Vietnamese proudly described as having “Bốn ngàn năm văn hiến” (four thousand years of civilisation). This view is not uncommon among respondents of the same category in France and in Australia and it can be illustrated by the following extract of a memoir.

- A: Ever since the day I came to Australia, I have not returned to Vietnam.*  
*Q: Are you planning to return to Vietnam?*  
*A: Yes, but only when Vietnam has been revolutionised and the communist government has undergone dramatic changes. For I do not wish to return to Vietnam knowing that it is still corrupted and that the people are deprived of freedom. (O. Memoir 54, male, born 1945, arrived in Australia 1975)*

## Family Values as Core Elements of the Vietnamese Culture

One of the research questions of this study was to find out what constitutes the core values of the Vietnamese culture. What are the elements of culture that overseas Vietnamese consider essential to transmit to their children and future generations? In order to ascertain the data for this question, the researcher has formulated one specific question on the main questionnaire asking the respondents to name what is most important to them about Vietnamese cultural life. Results showed that an exceptionally high number of respondents had identified family life and the Vietnamese language as the most important aspects of the Vietnamese culture as illustrated in *Table 8.3* below.

*Table 8.3 Aspects of Vietnamese Culture Rated as Very Important*  
*QF (N = 60)    QAA (N = 160)    QAY (N = 180)*

	Language (i)		Family (ii)		Religion (iii)		Music & (iv) Dance		Literature (v)		History & (vi) Geog		Respect (vii) Elders		Viet (viii) Food	
Respondents	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
QF group	51	85	51	85	44	73	10	17	25	42	26	43	46	77	22	37
QAA group	144	90	151	94	128	80	28	18	80	50	70	44	125	78	87	54
QAY group	142	79	165	92	98	54	30	17	83	46	54	30	151	84	99	55

This view was found to be not only very strong among first generation immigrants but also among second generation, those who were born in the host country. It was interesting to note that 92% of respondents from the QAY group which, consisting mainly of second generation Vietnamese born in Australia, considered family life very important to them and that a high percentage (84%) of respondents in this same group also thought that respect for elders was a very important characteristic of the Vietnamese cultural life. This again confirmed the significance of family values to this group because this particular characteristic, respect for elders, constitutes one of the most important values of Vietnamese family life. *Table 8.3* also shows that language was rated almost

equally important as family across the three groups of respondents. Other aspects of Vietnamese cultural life, such as religion, music and dance, literature and food were considered secondary to the importance of the family and language.

A similar open question was also used in all oral memoir interviews seeking respondents' personal reflections or comments on the issue. Here are some comments on the values of the Vietnamese family coming from second generation Vietnamese in Australia.

*Being a Vietnamese person, the thing I appreciate most is the respect you have for your family, whereas Australian families, they don't really keep in contact with their relatives and extended families. But with Vietnamese families we still have family get-togethers and gatherings and if your parents pass away we still remember them. (O. Memoir 19, female, Y 11 student, born in Australia)*

*I'm happy with the way I live my Vietnamese life. I follow the traditions, and how I was brought up into a Vietnamese family. I don't go out at night time. Sometimes I wish I could, but I just think that I'm still young, so I have plenty of time when I'm older, but now I'm living with my parents so I stick to the way I was brought up. I find this to be an advantage because Vietnamese families are generally close. The Vietnamese family traditions vary, and because my parents were married in Australia they are influenced by the Australian culture and know the Australian way of life. (O. Memoir 21, female, Y 12 student, born in Australia)*

*I was brought up close to my parents and would always listen to them and do whatever they say (like going out during the day, not the night). It's because I listen to them I've become a good person. But there are times when I think differently to them. (O. Memoir 20, male, Y 12 student, born in Australia)*

It is clear that all of these three students valued the Vietnamese family life highly. They expressed appreciation for being brought up in this family system. They agreed that the most distinctive characteristic of the Vietnamese family is the close relationship and solidarity among members. This relationship was based on a hierarchical order where parents had powerful influence over the children. These respondents recognised that their parents were strict and their freedom was restricted but willingly accepted the situation for their own good. Similar views were expressed by two oral memoir respondents (Nos 2, 13) of the same age-group in France in relation to the importance of the family in their life. Below are some comments representing parents' views on the family values.

*I am very traditional, even though I have quite a crowded family with many relatives, I still insist on having family gatherings on special occasions such as Vietnamese Festivals and New Year. I have always encouraged my children to adopt the Vietnamese attitudes towards everything they face in life, for I believe that only with a sound knowledge and confidence in one's own culture will a person of Vietnamese background be able to succeed in life.*

*(O. Memoir 54, male, born 1945, arrived in Australia 1975)*

Family gatherings were seen by this memoir respondent 54 and many others as a very important family tradition that Vietnamese people should maintain while living in the host country. It is the collective life of the family through which family values are put into practice. This is considered by many respondents as the best way to teach children these family values. This respondent also believed that a person of Vietnamese background needs to have a sound knowledge and confidence in his/her own culture to be able to succeed in the host country. By saying this he does not mean to promote a family education concentrating on Vietnamese culture only but to strive for the ideal situation aiming to educate children to become true bilingual and bicultural citizens.

*The culture of a country does not only consist of its language but also in the family's ability to help the children maintain their culture. We should teach them every aspect of culture, for example, how to behave at a Vietnamese dinner. The relationship between parents and their children and the relationship between the children and their siblings and their grandparents also represent the culture. In the Vietnamese language, we have ways to address the person we are talking to by adding the titles in front of their name. For example, "anh" for older brother, "chị" for older sister, "chú" for our father's younger brother and "cậu" for our mother's younger brother. This not only shows the richness of the Vietnamese language but also expresses the link among all members in the family.*

*(O. Memoir 8, male, born 1948, arrived in France 1983)*

This parent believed that family was a very important place to teach children and future generations every aspect of the Vietnamese culture. He again identified the roles and relationships among members of the Vietnamese family as an important family value, an aspect of the Vietnamese culture that Vietnamese parents need to teach their children. He also explained the connection between language and culture through the language that Vietnamese people used to express a close kinship system of the Vietnamese family.



## ***Conclusion***

Evidence from questionnaire and memoir responses from respondents, both in Paris and in Adelaide, all pointed to the same direction confirming that family was the most important value in the respondents' life. It was considered as one of the core elements of the Vietnamese culture along with the Vietnamese language. The family life that most respondents experienced in Paris and in Adelaide had undergone similar changes in its structure, pattern, roles and relationships compared with the traditional extended family model in Vietnam. Some of these changes did have negative effects on the family functioning as a harmonious collective unit. However, evidence from data gathered, especially memoirs showed that many of the collective values of Vietnamese family such as mutual love and support among members of the extended family, sacrificing individuals' interest for the sake of other members of the family have been strongly maintained in most respondents' families of this study. Evidence from the memoirs, in particular, confirmed the crucial role of the Vietnamese family in the process of cultural adaptation and successful integration of the respondents into the mainstream society both in Adelaide and Paris.

## **Chapter 9: Vietnamese Community Organisations as Social Systems and Cultural Identity in Australia and France**

### ***Introduction***

According to the humanistic sociological theory described in Chapter 3, the personal cultural systems of the participants and their linguistic systems in particular, would be determined by their participation in two different group systems, namely, the day-to-day life of the family as a primary group system and the activities of other secondary group systems such as schools or community organisations.

The social system of the Vietnamese family and its role in the maintenance and transmission of Vietnamese language and culture were examined in Chapter 8. The focus of this Chapter is to investigate the extent to which the social systems of Vietnamese community organisations in France and in Australia, as they were revealed in the respondents' memoirs and questionnaire responses, had influenced the cultural adaptation and integration process of the respondents, as well as the construction of the Vietnamese collective identity in the host country. The analysis aimed to identify any similarities and differences in the patterns of organisational structures and level of participation in the respective social and organisational contexts in France and in Australia.

The data used for the analysis of Vietnamese secondary social systems in this chapter were generated from a number of sources namely respondents' oral and written memoirs, their responses to the questionnaire, interviews with community leaders, community organisations' constitutions, reports, speeches, community websites, magazines and newsletters, as well as the researcher's participant observation.

### **Vietnamese Organisations as Secondary Social Systems**

Quỳnh Di (2003), a contemporary Vietnamese writer in USA, well-known among Vietnamese Catholics, claimed that collectivism and adaptability were the main characteristics of the Vietnamese. In fact, these were the very characteristics which had helped the Vietnamese migrants to adapt themselves easily and quickly to the new environment of the host country. Their natural inclination towards a collective lifestyle had also enabled them to maintain a strong primary group system of the family (Chapter 8) and to create a dynamic social system of community life wherever they lived.

Since the massive arrivals of Vietnamese refugees in Western countries began in 1975, an uncountable number of ethnic Vietnamese organisations and groups have been established in countries with a sustainable number of Vietnamese residents such as USA, Canada, France and Australia. Some associations have been organised internationally, across five continents (e.g., the Vietnamese Professionals Association, Vietnamese Students Associations); some at national level (e.g., the Vietnamese community in Australia with one Chapter in each state); and many others at the regional and local level. The United States, with one and half million people of Vietnamese origin (APC, 2000) at the time of data collection for this research, already had the greatest number of Vietnamese organisations and groups. France and Australia are among the countries outside Vietnam where community life is considered as the most dynamic and complex, compared with other countries in Europe or Asia where the Vietnamese population is smaller.

As the focus of this study was on the Vietnamese community in France and in Australia, a general examination of structures, functions and activities of the Vietnamese associations which have contributed to the dynamics of community life in these two countries, is presented in the next section, followed by a more detailed study of some key organisations.

According to humanistic sociological theory, community organisations can be regarded as secondary group systems of social values and act as reservoirs or stocks for individual members of the group to draw upon in the construction of their personal systems of social values, as well as their ideological values related to identity (Smolicz, 1979:149). Thus, each Vietnamese organisation in France or in Australia, of which the respondents are active members, is a social system, which has exercised certain influence on the formation of their personal and group cultural identity.

## **Vietnamese Community Organisations**

**In Australia**, apart from informal social networks, the Vietnamese in each state have established many formal associations and organisations over the years. The 1984 Directory of Ethnic Community Organisations in Australia listed 41 Vietnamese organisations over all capital cities with 14 in Melbourne and 7 in Sydney. The 1992 Directory listed a total of 61 Vietnamese Organisations. In 2008 it was estimated that the

number of Vietnamese formal and informal organisations in Australia was over two hundred. This estimate was based on information obtained through the Vietnamese community in Australia, Vietnamese websites and relevant Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commissions and Community Relations authorities in Australia. The capital city breakdown was Sydney 63, Melbourne 62, Brisbane 42, Adelaide 32, Perth 22, ACT only a few. The number of organisations reflects the size of the Vietnamese population and the dynamics of community life in each city.

**In France,** it was not possible for the researcher to obtain the exact number of ethnic Vietnamese organisations in operation in the country at the time, due to a lack of formal and consistent public records of such organisations. However, the key researchers in this area (Lê Hữu Khoa, 1981; Dorais, 1998; Lâm & Mais, 1995 and Mai Đức Vinh, 2003) have all agreed that “since the arrival of a massive number of Vietnamese in the region of Paris, an excessive number of associations had been established. More than one hundred were born. Some died as quickly as they were born. Some continued to function regularly. A dozen are well known among the Vietnamese in France” (Lâm & Mais, 1995).

It should be noted that some Vietnamese organisations in France were established many years before 1975 because Vietnamese people had been living in France as early as the First World War. For instance, La Mission Catholique Vietnamienne à Paris (Vietnamese Catholic Mission in Paris) began in 1947 (Mai Đức Vinh, 2003) and l’Union des Vietnamiens de France (Union of the Vietnamese in France) was established in 1968 (Lê Hữu Khoa, 1985). In contrast, all Vietnamese organisations in Australia were established after 1975.

## **Roles and Objectives**

**In Australia.** Data generated from community reports, newsletters, interviews of community leaders as well as the researcher’s participation in the community for more than thirty years show that in the first years of settlement, these Vietnamese organisations in Australia played an important role in re-enforcing traditional values and fulfilling the cultural needs of the Vietnamese. In later years their role was expanded to include settlement of new arrivals, sponsorship, counselling, welfare, education and cultural maintenance. Most organisations have a welfare function, but they also cater for various

other cultural, religious and recreational needs of the Vietnamese. Some organisations represent groups with special concerns such as women, teachers, students, ex-servicemen.

**In France.** According to Lâm-Mais (1995) and Lê Hữu Khoa (1985), a great number of Vietnamese organisations in France were established for political objectives only. Although they recruited members from all sections of the Vietnamese community, those who joined shared the same political or ideological orientation. Other organisations had social, cultural and humanitarian aims in their activities. A number were very active in the defence of the Vietnamese boat people in the camps in Hong Kong and other South East Asian countries (Lâm-Mais, 1995). There were also numerous associations of former students from the schools and universities of South Vietnam before 1975.

Lê Hữu Khoa (1985) classified Vietnamese organisations in France into three main categories (pro-communist, anti-communist and religious associations). The pro-communist ones always supported the Hanoi regime during the Vietnam-American War. The most representative of this group was the organisation called L' Union Generale des Vietnamiens de France (L'UGVF), while the most active among the anti-communist organisations was the Vietnamese Students' Association (L'Association Generale des Etudiants Vietnamiens de France). Due to their strongly opposed political orientations, these two organisations had a few public clashes during the Tết festivals which they organised for the community in France in the early 1970's, when the Vietnam War was at its most controversial stage.

Lê Hữu Khoa (1985) claimed that Vietnamese organisations in France were deeply divided because of these ideological differences and that the leaders of these associations were more pre-occupied with advancing their political agenda than helping the Vietnamese people living in France. He also observed that the organisations which were able to assemble the greatest number of Vietnamese people were the religious organisations, namely the Buddhist and Catholic associations in France. These religious organisations had contributed significantly in helping the Vietnamese, especially those who arrived after 1975, in their social and cultural adaptation to French society (See detailed discussion on La Mission Catholique à Paris further on).

On the issue of ideological differences, the Vietnamese community organisations in Australia are certainly more homogenous, more united in their political purpose than

those in France. Around Australia there may be individuals, or some informal overseas students' groups, which have been secretly supporting the Hanoi government, but so far no official Vietnamese pro-Hanoi regime organisations have existed in Australia. All registered Vietnamese ethnic organisations in Australia, big or small, aspire to the same ideological orientation which is to help with the settlement of the Vietnamese in the host country, to fight against human right abuses and corruption of the Vietnam communist government and to promote the maintenance of Vietnamese culture among their members and in the wider Australian multicultural society.

## **Funding and Support**

**In Australia.** In the 1980's as a result of the recommendations of the Report of the Committee of Review of Migrant Services and Programs chaired by Galbally (Galbally Report, 1978), a wide range of programs and services were offered to migrants and refugees. Government funds were available to ethnic community organisations which applied in order to employ welfare workers to provide services in their own language. The Vietnamese organisations were quick to take advantage of this opportunity. Some organisations were successful in obtaining funds to employ Vietnamese welfare workers or youth workers, but most of the work of the organisations still relied on volunteers (Viviani, 1995). The wide range of organisations and activities not only reflected the diverse needs and interests of a growing community but was also a response to developing government expectations that ethnic associations should play a part in resolving issues facing their communities.

**In France.** Data from interviews with community leaders in France revealed that unlike those in Australia, Vietnamese ethnic organisations in France were not supported by the government. The French government did not have an official multicultural policy which provided financial support to ethnic organisations or recognised their legitimate work in helping its newly arrived Vietnamese migrants and refugees to adapt themselves to mainstream society. Thus, almost all Vietnamese organisations in France had to raise funds among their members each time they organised a festival or ran a program of activities for the community. However, it was well-known in the Vietnamese community, that pro-communist organisations were well supported by the Vietnamese communist government during the Vietnam War. They were provided with financial and material resources for running numerous political campaigns among the Vietnamese in

France (Lam-Mais, 1995) and beyond, in support of the Hanoi regime and against USA and the Republic of South Vietnam.

This might explain why pro-communist organisations, such as L'UGVF, could organise a better network of support for Vietnamese students and run more successful campaigns in support of the Hanoi regime in the late 1960's and early 1970's than the self-funded anti-communist associations, such as l'Association Generale des Etudiants Vietnamiens en France (Association of Vietnamese Students in France), which operated on a very limited budget. The personal experience of the researcher who studied in France during that period would support the same conclusion.

## **Participation**

The formation of organisations and participation in community life at the level of secondary relationships was a relatively new experience for the majority of Vietnamese both in Australia and in France, but they adapted to this role very well. In Vietnam, where the extended family was responsible for the welfare of its members, voluntary work on a community basis was hardly known. For many overseas Vietnamese initially, the concept of a community organisation was unfamiliar, and the transience of many organisations also contributed to the fact that many Vietnamese were reluctant to participate in their activities.

A survey in Sydney in 1980 found that over 80 % of Vietnamese did not belong to any association and did not rely on formal Vietnamese organisations for direct assistance (Loh, 1988). They preferred to depend on informal networks instead. Although this trend was still apparent, by 1990 there was evidence that more Vietnamese in Australia and in France were participating in community organisations, thus enhancing their capacity to play an important part in long-term settlement issues and in the maintenance of the Vietnamese cultural heritage in the host country (Viviani, 1995; Lam-Mais, 1995). The participation of this study's respondents in Vietnamese and other social organisations is described in the sections which follow.

### **Respondents' Participation in Social Organisations**

All 400 questionnaire respondents were asked the question "Do you belong to any social organisation in Australia/France?" and the results of their responses are presented in *Table 9.1* below.

*Table 9.1 Respondents' Participation in Social Organisations*

Respondents	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>QF group</b>	28	<b>47</b>	32	<b>53</b>	60	100
<b>QAA group</b>	140	<b>88</b>	20	<b>13</b>	160	100
<b>QAY group</b>	62	<b>34</b>	118	<b>66</b>	180	100

Evidence from *Table 9.1* shows that the self-reported level of participation was very high (88%) among respondents of the QAA group in Australia compared with those in the QF group in France (47%). The main explanation for this difference between the two groups could be the geographical factor. The scattered pattern of settlement of the Vietnamese in France would make participation more difficult. It could also be that the question being asked was not fully understood by the QAA group respondents. It was noted that many QAA respondents gave the name of a Catholic community or a group within that Catholic community as the social organisation in which they participated. Evidence from *Table 9.1* also shows that the participation rate among second generation Vietnamese in Australia (QAY group) was relatively low (34%) but it seemed to reflect the general trend of Vietnamese community life everywhere in the world today. Vietnamese community activities in general have not attracted many young Vietnamese, especially those who do not speak Vietnamese well.

Below are the lists of organisations that respondents claimed to take part in at the time of questionnaire completion.

### **Organisations in which Respondents Participated in Australia**

<i>Vietnamese Organisations and Groups</i>	<i>Number</i>
1. Vietnamese Catholic Community in Pooraka, SA	218
2. Vietnamese Community of Woodville-Findon Parish	31
3. Vietnamese Buddhist Temple in SA	18
4. Vietnamese Elderly Association in SA	11
5. Association of Viet Clergy and Religious in Australia	10
6. South Australian Vietnamese Teachers' Association	10
7. Vietnamese Community in Australia, SA Chapter	08
8. Lam Son Martial Arts	06
9. Vietnamese Group of St Patrick's Parish	05
10. Vietnamese Students' Association in SA	03
11. Lạc-Việt Scout Group	02
12. Vietnamese Folk Songs' Group	02
13. Vietnamese Evangelical Community in SA	01
14. Vietnamese Business Group	01
15. Vietnamese Women's Association in SA	01



16. Association of Vietnamese Professionals	01
17. Vietnamese Tài Chi Club	01
18. Adelaide Tuần Báo (Viet Weekly Newspaper)	01

#### *Groups within the Vietnamese Catholic Community*

1. Eucharistic Children's Movement (200)	22
2. Cursillo Movement (200)	16
3. Legion of Mary Movement (190)	11
4. Hy Vọng Choir (25)	06
5. Việt Linh Choir (30)	06
6. Marriage Encounter Movement	04
7. Phaolô Lộc Choir (25)	04
8. Catholic Youth Leaders' Group	04
9. Altar Servers' Group	03
10. Third Order of the Dominicans	02

#### *Non-Vietnamese Organisations*

1. School Sports Team	03
2. Australian Dental Association	01
3. Association of Pilots	01
4. Woodville Hockey Club	01

### **Organisations in which Respondents Participated in France**

#### *Vietnamese Organisations and Groups* *Number*

1. La Mission Catholique à Paris	52
2. Association of Vietnamese Professionals	01
3. Association of Franco-Vietnamese in Paris Region	01
4. Association of Young Vietnamese in Orleans Region	01
5. Association of the Vietnamese in France	01
6. Association of Overseas Vietnamese Lawyers	01
7. Thầy Vân Mutual Support Group	01
8. Association of Former Students of Đà Lạt University	01

#### *Groups within La Mission Catholique à Paris*

1. Cursillo Movement (400)	15
2. Eucharistic Children's Movement (250)	11
3. Legion of Mary Movement (100)	08
4. Lê Bảo Tịnh Choir (2)	07
5. Catholic Youth Leaders' Group	04
6. Catholic Seniors' Group	03

#### *Non-Vietnamese Organisation*

1. Trade Union for Workers in France	01
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A comparison of the list from France to that from Australia, indicates that respondents' participation in non-Vietnamese organisations was very low compared with that in the Vietnamese organisations in both countries. It appeared that respondents in both France and Australia established their secondary level of relationships mainly among the Vietnamese. It was very much an in-group social relationship pattern. The second

observation was that respondents from Australia participated in a greater number of community organisations compared with those in France. However, this could have resulted from the fact that the number of respondents from Australia was much greater than those from France, and that there were a greater number of relevant organisations available for respondents in Australia to participate. The third observation is that the two Vietnamese Catholic organisations namely, La Mission Catholique à Paris (LMCVP) and the Vietnamese Catholic Community in Pooraka, South Australia (VCCSA) had the highest membership among the respondents (52 or 86% of respondents from France, and 200 or 55% of those from Australia, respectively). Similarly, respondents of both countries participated in the same or similar groups or movements within their respective Vietnamese Catholic community. From a comparative perspective, this point would become more relevant in the analysis of data concerning the two Vietnamese Catholic communities, later on in this chapter.

As it was reported previously that 74% of the respondents from Australia were Catholic and 5% were Buddhist (Chapter 4), it is appropriate that the following section begins with a general discussion of all Vietnamese religious institutions established by the Vietnamese migrants in France and in Australia, Buddhist and Christian, followed by a detailed comparative study of the two selected Catholic communities with the highest membership among the respondents (The VCCSA and LMCVP). The intention here is to compare the extent to which these Catholic organisations had influenced the cultural adaptation of the respondents and their integration into the host societies. It was also intended to explore the influence of these organisations, as social systems, on the formation of the respondents' personal and group cultural systems

### **Vietnamese Religious Organisations**

The 2006 Australian population census recorded that the two major religious affiliations among those born in Vietnam were Buddhism (93,610 persons or 59%), and Catholicism (35,400 persons or 22%) with the remainder (19%) being in other categories. These figures did not include those who were born in Australia. Although it was not possible to obtain the most recent statistical data on religious affiliation of the Vietnamese in France, evidence from previous studies (Lê Hữu Khoa, 1985, Lâm-Mais 1995; Mai Đức Vinh, 2003) showed a similar trend in religious affiliations among the Vietnamese in France.

Mai Đức Vinh (2003)<sup>6</sup> claimed approximately 85,000 persons were Catholics (34%), including those who were born in France, out of a population of 250,000 persons of Vietnamese origin including those born in France, who were living in France in 2003. The percentage of Vietnamese Catholics in France, based on Mai Đức Vinh's calculation, is relatively high compared with that in Australia and more than triple the proportion of Catholics in the general population in Vietnam (10%) (Mai Đức Vinh, 2003). The main reason for this difference was that the majority of the first wave of Vietnamese refugees who settled in Australia and in France were Catholics. They had left Vietnam for fear of religious persecution by the communist regime (Viviani, 1984; Lê Hữu Khoa, 1985).

The Buddhists and the Catholics have always been the most prominent religious groups among the Vietnamese migrants in France and in Australia. Both groups have been able to organise themselves relatively well as distinctive religious communities with their own temples, churches or centres where people can gather to worship in their mother tongue (Vietnamese) in a culturally appropriate environment. Sixty-one Buddhist Temples and Centres were listed on the Vietnam Information Services Pty Limited website in May 2008 with the greatest numbers in New South Wales (29) and Victoria (13). South Australia has five Buddhist groups with their own centres but the Pháp Hoa Temple, “Chùa Pháp Hoa”, gathers most of the practising Buddhists living in South Australia (VIS, 2008). Other Vietnamese religious groups, such as the Cao Đài and Hòa Hảo (Buddhist sects founded in Vietnam in the 20<sup>th</sup> century which combine supernatural elements from various religions) and other Christian denominations (Hội Thánh Tin Lành) are also present in both France and Australia, but the membership of these groups is relatively small compared with the main Buddhist and Catholic communities. None of the respondents in this study claimed to belong to the Cao Đài or Hòa Hảo community. For details of the respondents' religious affiliations see *Tables 4.7 & 4.8, Chapter 4*.

## **Vietnamese Catholic Communities**

The Catholic Church is first of all a universal institution. For centuries it has been consistent in its belief system, its liturgical celebrations and its organisation structures. This goes beyond the boundaries of nations, races and cultures. Because of this very Catholic nature, Vietnamese Catholic migrant communities in many countries in the

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<sup>6</sup> Mgr. Mai Đức Vinh has been director of La Mission Catholique à Paris since 1980. He is a well known writer among the Vietnamese Catholics overseas. He has published a number of papers on the Vietnamese Catholic Community in France.

world, including France and Australia, were established for the same purpose, based on a similar organisational model. These communities came into being in the 70's and 80's as a result of the "Pastoralis Migratorum Cura" [Pastoral Care of Migrants] announced by the head of the Catholic Church, Pope Paul VI, in 1969 which recognised the pastoral needs of migrant communities around the world to have services provided in their own language and culture, mainly through the appointments of migrant chaplains.

**In Australia.** Each weekend thousands of Vietnamese Catholics gather in different locations around the country as faith communities to attend Sunday Mass in their own language. However, only some of these communities have been officially recognised by the local bishops through their appointment of chaplains responsible for the pastoral care and the administration of the communities. A dozen official Vietnamese Catholic communities have been established in Australia since 1978. The largest is Sydney-NSW; five are in Melbourne, one in Perth, two in Brisbane, two in Adelaide, one in Canberra and the most recent one is in Wollongong. The Sydney-NSW Catholic community reported having 13,000 members in 1995 and a team of eight Vietnamese priests appointed as chaplains for the community (Chu Văn Chi et al, 1995:34). At the time of this research, the membership of this community was about 15,000 but the chaplaincy team was reduced to only three priests. This team provides pastoral services on a daily basis to Vietnamese Catholics in thirteen different centres around NSW. The communities in Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth are middle sized communities with about 2000-3000 members and each has one or two chaplains. Canberra and Wollongong have relatively small communities which gather around 200-600 members at Sunday Mass. Each has only a part-time chaplain, responsible for the pastoral care of the community (Đinh Đức Đạo, 2003; Chu Văn Chi, 2007).

All of these communities were set up with similar aims and objectives. Their principal aim was to provide for the spiritual and pastoral needs of the Vietnamese refugees who settled in Australia, in a culturally appropriate environment. Promoting and preserving Vietnamese culture and language maintenance are important objectives of all Vietnamese religious community organisations including the Vietnamese Catholic organisations. They also provided opportunities for Vietnamese Catholics, many of whom could not speak or understand English, to build a strong network of mutual support and friendship among members of the community through their participation in various religious groups and movements within the communities.

The most commonly found groups were the Eucharistic Children's Movement, the Choirs, Cursillo Movement, Legion of Mary, Marriage Encounter, the Youth and the Senior Groups. These groups and movements were organised to promote the participation of members according to their age, interests and spiritual needs. For instance, the Eucharistic Children's Movement was for children aged 6-17. This movement has proved very popular in all Vietnamese Catholic communities around the world. It was founded in Vietnam, based on the Scout structure and philosophy, but using the Bible as its foundation. This movement has gathered hundreds and thousands of Vietnamese Catholic children across all Catholic communities in Australia. A middle sized Catholic community (Adelaide, Perth, and Brisbane) would have 200-300 children participating in this movement. The Sydney community had more than a thousand children in this movement and it ran eight different training sessions for leaders of this movement each year (Chu Văn Chi et al, 1995: 158). At the local community level, members of this movement gathered every weekend for at least two hours of activities and training in the Vietnamese language. At the national level, a number of leadership training programs and camps were organised for its members every year. The language used in its programs of activities was mainly Vietnamese but in recent times English has been used occasionally by some young leaders, especially those of the second generation.

Choirs were another community activity which attracted hundreds of young Vietnamese Catholics around Australia, especially those who liked to sing. Every small community had at least one choir to sing in Vietnamese at Sunday Mass and on special occasions. Middle sized Catholic communities usually had two or three choirs each. The largest community in Sydney had ten different choirs, which attracted the participation of several hundred young people (Chu Văn Chi et al, 1995: 158).

**In terms of structure and administration,** these communities were organised according to the hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church and each community reflected a Catholic parish in Vietnam. Each community was headed by a Vietnamese priest who was assisted by a group of representatives, mainly men, called the Pastoral Council. As with other Vietnamese organisations, most of these parish-based communities still operated as patriarchal social institutions where the priest had all the power to decide for the community. However, in recent times some communities have tried to encourage participation of lay people - not only men but also women - in the organisation and decision making process of the community.

All the Catholic communities in Australia were concerned with issues of language, culture and faith development and transmission among the younger members, especially those of the second generation, born and raised in the secular Australian society. This was evident from the fact that they often included specific cultural activities, such as the celebration of Vietnamese traditional festivals in their annual programs, in addition to the main religious celebrations, such as Christmas and Easter, which were also celebrated in the Vietnamese tradition. Most Catholic communities (Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne Perth and Sydney) run Vietnamese schools for children to learn the language. Each school had a few hundred students; the largest school was in Adelaide (Đắc Lộ School) with over 900 students (ESA, 2006), but not all of these students were Catholics. Interviews with the chaplains, community leaders and parents confirmed that the Vietnamese language was used exclusively in sermons, religious services, religious instruction programs to children and marriage preparation courses for young adults. This was accepted practice in all Vietnamese Catholic communities around Australia. There was a strong and consistent belief that teaching Vietnamese to children was vital for the maintenance and transmission to future generations of not only the Vietnamese cultural heritage but also the Vietnamese Catholic faith traditions.

Some of these communities also provided English classes for adults and hosted various cultural orientation and education programs in order to help the newly-arrived members to integrate into Australian society. None of these communities had a welfare office as such, but the social well-being of members and others in the wider community was fostered by the chaplains and leaders of different groups as part of their pastoral services.

**Vietnamese Catholic Centres.** In the Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory and Tasmania, where the number of Vietnamese Catholics is relatively small, it has not been possible for them to build their own centres. All other States (NSW, SA, QLD, WA, VIC) had one or two Vietnamese Catholic Centres.

These centres were built with approval but no financial support from the local Catholic Church. The main source of funding came from community members' contributions. Many families were very generous in donating thousands of dollars to these building projects. All have contributed what they could afford and took pride in the completion of their own community centre. These centres served two main purposes: firstly, for the priests to conduct religious services on a daily and weekly basis for the community, and

secondly, for different groups and movements within that community to meet and run their religious, cultural and social activities.

Here are some examples of Catholic Community Centres in Australia

*Picture 9. 1 Vietnamese Catholic Centre in Perth, WA*



*Source: Photograph taken by the researcher*

*Picture 9. 2 Vietnamese Catholic Centre at Pooraka, SA*



*Source: Photograph by Fr Tòng Trần*

Community cultural events, educational programs and other activities are also hosted in these centres. Some communities, such as those in Western Australia and Queensland,

ran Vietnamese classes for children and opened a canteen selling Vietnamese food for people to enjoy after Sunday Mass in the Centre as well.

The ultimate aim that each Vietnamese Catholic community in Australia wanted to achieve was for its community to function like an extended family where close relationships, genuine care and support among members were fostered through their participation in the activities of groups and movements. The following quotes clearly expressed this most important aim of the communities.

*The Vietnamese Catholic Community in Sydney-NSW is structured as a united extended family in which all members are to live in harmony and love, and to support each other in maintaining and developing our faith in God, and the love for our country. We are encouraged to preserve the traditional values of our language and culture and at the same time to adapt ourselves appropriately to the Australian society.*

*(Chu Văn Chi et al, 1995: 160)*

*The Vietnamese Catholic Community in South Australia is organised as an extended family in which everyone lives in harmony and supports each other in order to foster their faith in God, to maintain and nurture their love and respect for the ancestors, to develop the spiritual and cultural values and at the same time to help each other adapt themselves to the Australian society. (CDCGNV/NU, 1991:4)*

*The Vietnamese Christian Community is established as a united extended family in which all members are to support and encourage each other to maintain and develop their faith in God. (VCCSA's Constitution, Ch 1, 2.1a)*

If the community structure was organised as an extended family, the community centre then became the common home for all members to foster their relationships with God and other members. In cultural terms, the Catholic community centres can be seen to have a symbolic function in the same way as a village communal house in Vietnam. Each village in Vietnam usually has a communal house to serve as a symbol of unity and a gathering place for significant events. In Catholic parishes in Vietnam, an impressive church was substituted for the village communal house (Minh-Tam -Việt Dung- Huỳnh Ngân, 1995:7). This tradition has been continued in Australia to provide a positive environment for nurturing family relationships and group activities which are vital for the maintenance of Vietnamese cultural and religious value systems. It could be argued that the community structures and organisations set up to support the Catholic minority religious group in Vietnam proved readily adaptable to provide for the religious and cultural needs of a minority cultural group in the Australian contexts.



**Funding and Support.** The main source of income of the Vietnamese Catholic communities came from its members through Sunday collections and other fund-raising initiatives of the community concerned. As a policy, the Australian government does not provide financial support for specific religious activities or building religious centres. However, it has provided some funding support for the teaching of Vietnamese through the ethnic school program. Some small government funding support was provided for cultural, educational or recreational activities organised by these communities. The Vietnamese Catholic communities, however, have been relatively well supported by the local Catholic Church. The Church pays the appointed chaplains in the same way as it does any priest working in an Australian parish. In turn, as with other parish communities, Vietnamese Catholics are expected to contribute financially to the local Church so that the Church, in turn, can support the chaplains.

Evidence from interviews and community reports all indicated that the religious and cultural life within the Vietnamese Catholic communities around Australia has been very active and vibrant. Each community still attracts hundreds of children and young people to their religious services and other social and cultural activities (Chu Văn Chi et al, 1995; VCCSA, 2000; Nguyễn Hữu Quảng, 2007). These communities have provided good opportunities for young people to build up and activate their Vietnamese cultural and religious value systems.

**In France.** Trần Công Lao (2003) claimed that fifty-six Vietnamese Catholic communities, each with a chaplain and a representative committee had been formed in forty-seven French dioceses since 1975. Only one of them (LMCVP) had the status of a parish with its own centre in the Paris region. There were also Vietnamese Catholics scattered in forty-eight other French dioceses but their numbers were not sufficient to form a community of their own. So, they just went to Mass in the local French parish. Trần Công Lao (2003) classified these communities into three different types, depending on their numbers.

1. *Cộng Đoàn Hạt Lúa (Rice grain community- small)* with less than 100 members, such as those in Oyonnax (20), Orléand (30), Dijon (60), Poitiers (80), St Etienne (84), Montpellier (98) etc.
2. *Cộng Đoàn Hạt Ngô (Corn grain community - middle size)* with around 100-300 members, such as those in Nancy (120), Rennes-St-Brieuc (160), Grenoble (163), Nantes (200), Limoges (215) etc.

3. *Cộng Đoàn Hạt Mít (Jackfruit community - large)* with more than 400 or 500 members, such as those in Toulouse (450), Bordeaux (460), Troyes (480), Marseille (600), Strasbourg (700), Lyon (1,200) and Paris (12,000).

Availability of specifically Vietnamese religious and cultural activities in the small and middle sized communities was very limited. Some had Mass in Vietnamese only once a week, once a month or only a few times in a year. Apart from gathering for Sunday Mass, these communities did not usually have religious groups or movements where members could meet regularly to form bonds and relationships and consequently, nurture the community life of the group. They did not have the resources to organise Vietnamese language classes, traditional festivals or any other cultural activities for their children as the larger communities regularly did. Thus, the majority of children and young people from these communities were unable to speak the language because they did not have the opportunity to learn their language and culture anywhere, apart from their families. As they could not understand the language, young people from these communities did not want to participate in community activities or even attend Mass. Many religious leaders and researchers (Trần Công Lao, 1999, 2003; Mai ĐứcVinh, 2003; Nguyễn Xuân, 2003) expressed concerns about the future of young people in the Vietnamese Catholic communities in the Western world, especially those living in small and scattered communities. They predicted that these small communities would eventually disappear into the margins of the mainstream host society.

The larger communities in France (Category 3) did seek to create a more dynamic community life, generated by active participation of members in the religious, educational and cultural activities of the different groups and movements, which were almost identical to those operating in Australian-Vietnamese Catholic communities. Among these large communities, the one in Paris (LMCVP) not only was the largest and the oldest, but was also recognised as the most active and best organised community in France and in Europe (see details below).

## **The Vietnamese Catholic Communities in Adelaide and Paris Compared**

### **Formation and Organisational Structure**

The Vietnamese Christian Community in South Australia (VCCSA) was one of the first Catholic communities established in Australia. It was the result of the initiative of the late Archbishop of Adelaide, James Gleeson, through his official appointment of the first chaplain to the community in 1979, Fr Augustin Nguyễn Đức Thụ, a Jesuit priest. His work was to minister to the pastoral needs of a group of two dozen Vietnamese Catholic refugees who had arrived in South Australia in 1977. Three Vietnamese nuns, including the researcher, have been involved in the establishment of, and the ongoing pastoral work for the community for the last thirty years. Through support and encouragement from the local government and the Church, the community has developed over time in all aspects of its community life. The VCCSA became an incorporated organisation with its own constitution approved in 1983. As the membership of the community increased considerably in the 1980's, the Church appointed another Vietnamese priest to assist the main chaplain. Since then, the leadership of the community has been provided by a chaplaincy team consisting of two priests and two nuns and a pastoral council of more than twenty men and women, elected by community members every three years (VCCSA, 1991).

At the initial stage, the community did not have its own centre so it was always on the move from one location to another depending on the availability of the church and the willingness of the Australian parish priest. It was most difficult to find a time for the celebration of a Vietnamese Mass for the community in the busy Mass time schedule of an Australian parish church on Sundays, without talking about other community activities. This situation forced the community to think of raising funds in order to build its own centre. After more than ten years struggling with all kinds of obstacles coming from the local government and church authorities, as well as opposition within the Vietnamese community itself, the first stage of a spacious community centre built on five hectares of land at Pooraka, South Australia was completed and officially opened on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1995 (see Picture 9.2). This was a dream which became a reality for the Vietnamese Catholics in Adelaide. This centre has a two-fold purpose: firstly, it is a place where people gather for worship and mutual support, and secondly, it provides an

opportunity for people to foster Vietnamese cultural traditions (Minh-Tâm Nguyễn et al, 1995).

Compared with La Mission Catholique Vietnamienne à Paris (LMCVP), the VCCSA is relatively new. According to Mai Đức Vinh (1979), LMCVP began in 1947 from the initiative of a group of Vietnamese clergy and religious who were studying in Paris at the time. It was initially created as a Catholic Mission, in response to the pastoral needs of Vietnamese Catholic students and the Vietnamese who had settled in France after the Second World War. Members of LMCVP at that time were very much involved in the movement to fight for the independence of Vietnam but were totally anti-communist. LMCVP was closely connected with the church in Vietnam because its first chaplain was appointed in 1952 by the archbishop of Paris with the approval of the Bishops' Conference of Vietnam. With the influx of Vietnamese refugees many of whom were Catholic in the 1970's and 1980's, the French local church recognised LMCVP as the main organisation which could provide for the pastoral, cultural and social needs of all Vietnamese Catholics in France. In a similar way, the Australian Catholic church has recognised and supported the Vietnamese Catholic communities in Australia.

Since 1977, LMCVP has been recognised by the French local church, as a “Giáo Xứ Việt Nam Vùng Paris” (Vietnamese Parish in Paris) or “La Paroisse Vietnamienne à Paris” and has enjoyed the status and privileges of a French Catholic parish. Mgr. Mai Đức Vinh has been director of the parish since 1980 and he is assisted by two other Vietnamese priests and a nun. Similar to the VCCSA, this team of religious leaders has worked in conjunction with the elected pastoral council to plan and manage all community projects and activities. LMCVP was in fact the earliest Catholic community established not only in France but in the world outside of Vietnam.

For many years the LMCVP centre was confined in a very small building at 15 Rue Boissonade, 75014 Paris, then moved to a more suitable location at 38 Rue des Epinettes 75017 Paris in 2001. This new location provided better space and facilities for all community activities including Vietnamese classes on Saturdays. Thus, it can be seen that, in terms of organisational and leadership structures, there are more similarities than differences between LMCVP and the VCCSA.

## Membership and Participation

Since the VCCSA settled in its permanent centre in Pooraka in 1995, all aspects of community life have developed further. Community activities and the level of participation and solidarity among members have increased considerably. The most recent registration of the families who participated regularly in the activities of this community recorded a membership of 2543 persons (Nguyễn Quốc Hiệp, 2008) but compared with that of LMCVP, which was estimated at 12,000 (Trần Công Lao, 2003), the VCCSA is relatively a small community. It should be noted that there were two distinctive groups of Vietnamese people forming the membership of LMCVP community. Those who came to France before 1975 then stayed on after the fall of Saigon (mainly students from the rich and well educated Catholic families of South Vietnam) and those who came to France after 1975 as refugees. Most people in the former group at the time of interview were working in professional jobs and seemed to have no difficulty in integrating into the French society, while many in the latter group were still struggling to learn French. By comparison, the membership of the VCCSA was more homogeneous than that of LMCVP, as it consisted mainly of refugees who came to Australia after April 1975.

The membership of the VCCSA among the respondents from Australia (QAY and QAA groups) was relatively high (62-66%) and that of LMCVP among the respondents from France (QF group) was even higher (87%) as presented in *Table 9.2* below. It should be noted that 38% of the respondents in the QAY group did not belong to the VCCSA because many from this group were drawn from various South Australian mainstream schools where the Vietnamese language was taught as a subject. It should also be noted that of the 34% of those in the QAA group who were not members of the VCCSA, 22% stated that they were members of other Vietnamese Catholic groups in South Australia and the rest (12%) were those who belonged to other social and religious organisations.

*Table 9. 2 Membership of the VCCSA and LMCVP among Respondents*

Respondents	Yes		No		Total		Organisations
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
QF group	52	87	8	13	60	100	MCVP
QAA group	106	66	54	34	160	100	VCCSA
QAY group	112	62	68	38	180	100	VCCSA

The importance of being a member of a religious community, such as the VCCSA or LMCVP was evaluated differently by each group of respondents as shown by the results of the questionnaire survey presented in *Table 9.3* below

*Table 9.3 Importance of Belonging to a Religious Community*

	Very import		Rel import		Not import		Not Stated		Total	
Respondents	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
QF group	44	73	13	22	3	5	0	0	60	100
QAA group	129	81	19	12	12	8	0	0	160	100
QAY group	58	32	60	33	38	21	24	13	180	100

*Table 9.3* shows a high majority of respondents across all three groups (65-95%) regarded their membership in a religious community, in this instance a Catholic community, as *very or relatively important*. The comparison of the percentage of those who considered their belonging to a religious community *very important* between the QAA (81%) and QF (73%) groups showed that respondents from Australia evaluated the importance of belonging to a religious community more highly than those in France. *Table 9.3* shows nearly a quarter of respondents in the QAY group evaluated membership of a religious community as *not important* in their lives with another 13% not answering the question. It was evident from these results that young respondents of the second generation who made up the QAY group did not regard religious communities or religion as highly as their parents, many of whom were in the QAA group.

One of the concrete measurements of the vitality of a Catholic community is the level of its members' participation in Sunday Mass. In France Sunday Mass attendance was estimated at an average of 50% across all Vietnamese Catholic communities in France including LMCVP (Trần Công Lao, 2003) but Sunday Mass attendance of the VCCSA has been reported at 83% on average over the recent years (Nguyễn Quốc Hiệp, 2008). It should be pointed out that apart from its main centre, LMCVP had six other Mass centres in the Paris region (Pointoise, Ermont, Noisy Le Grad, Sarcelles-Garges, Staino Pierrefitte and Villiers Le Bel) at the time of this research. Each of these Mass centres gathered a few families in a local church every two weeks for the celebration of Mass in Vietnamese. The VCCSA's main Mass centre is at Pooraka with three Sunday Masses celebrated in Vietnamese each weekend and one Mass on weekdays, except Mondays. Thus, it would appear that the level of participation in Sunday Mass of the VCCSA was

much greater than that of LMCVP. This could mean either that the rate of Vietnamese Catholics participating in French local parishes was greater than in Australia, because Vietnamese Catholics in France were more integrated into the life of their local church than those in Australia, or that many Vietnamese-French Catholics no longer worried about their religious obligations. Geographical distance could also be a factor influencing participation in the community activities of LMCVP.

With regard to participating in the activities of groups and movements, evidence showed a similar pattern for each group within both communities. LMCVF reported having 14 different groups and movements in 1997 (Mai Đức Vinh, 1997), most of which are still active at present, while the VCCSA recorded 23 different groups and movements in 1991 (CĐCGNVNA, 1991) and almost all of them are currently active. Proportionally speaking, it could be said that participation in community life through religious groups and movements among the members of the VCCSA was greater than those of LMCVP if one considered membership of each group as a percentage of the total population forming that community. For instance, both communities reported having around 250 members in the Eucharistic Children's movement. This figure represented 7% of participation rate of this particular group for the VCCSA and 2% for LMCVF. Mai Đức Vinh (1997) reported that there were two choirs of about forty young people singing at Sunday Masses at LMCVF centre while the VCCSA had three different choirs gathering more than one hundred young people. Each choir was responsible for the singing at one of the three Sunday Masses for the community. Proportionately speaking, it could be said that there was a greater level of participation of young people in community activities among the VCCSA members compared to those of LMCVP.

Identical religious groups and movements (Cursillo, Eucharistic Children's movement, Legion of Mary, Choirs, Marriage Preparation, Vocation Group, Catholic Mothers' Group, Youth Group, and Elderly Group) have been operating in both communities since the late 1970's. All of these religious groups had their origins in Vietnam. The ways in which these group activities had been organised in the host countries, were similar to those in Vietnam (Mai Đức Vinh, 2003).

Many respondents, who belonged to the VCCSA, reported their participation in one or several of the above groups. It was evident through respondents' memoir responses that they strongly believed in the value of these groups. They saw them as vital for the maintenance and development of their faith in God and a good opportunity for them to

establish friendships with others in the community. Below are some comments representing this view among the memoir respondents from the VCCSA.

*I belong to two groups in the Vietnamese Catholic community. My first one is the Eucharistic Children's Group and I've been with this group for a long time. My second group is the altar servers' group. I started when I was in year four and I am now in year twelve. I'm happy with that group because it helps me to keep my faith in God and it is a good way to meet new friends. One of my best friends has been an altar server with me for a very long time. If young people aren't motivated to enter these groups then the Vietnamese community will disperse.*

*(O. Memoir 20, male, Y 12 student, born in Australia)*

*I participate in several groups within the Vietnamese Catholic community because I think that it is important for a Catholic to be involved in church groups and activities as they bring us closer to God.*

*(O. Memoir 45, male, born 1937, arrived in Australia 1980)*

Oral memoir respondents from LMCVP did not emphasise the importance of groups and movements as much as those from the VCCSA, although they recognised the value of participating in the activities organised by LMCVP as a way of strengthening their faith in God and maintaining the Vietnamese culture. This view was expressed by several oral memoir respondents from LMCVP in similar terms as in the following.

*Hiện bây giờ thi giáo xứ Việt nam tại Paris có rất nhiều hoạt động giúp cho Việt kiều công giáo ở Pháp, và nhất là tại Paris có được dịp và hoàn cảnh tốt để duy trì đức tin và văn hóa của mình, đặc biệt là vấn đề ngôn ngữ cho trẻ em và những cuộc gặp gỡ của người lớn. Tôi rất thích tham dự các sinh hoạt này.*

*At present, LMCVP has many activities which are helpful to us, the Catholic Việt kiều in France, and especially those in Paris, to maintain our faith and our culture. It provides good opportunities for children to learn the language and adults to meet each other. I like to participate in these activities very much.*

*(O. Memoir 6, male, born 1943, arrived in France 1973)*

Religious leaders serving LMCVP as directors or chaplains over the years, such as Mgr. Mai Đức Vinh or Fr Đinh Đồng Thượng Sách, expressed more concern about young people not being interested in community life than those responsible for the VCCSA.

*The presence of young people at LMCVP becomes less and less in number. Each year, LMCVP enrolls around 250 children aged 8-15 in the religious instruction courses, Vietnamese classes and the Eucharistic Children's movement but at the age of fifteen, they leave and never return. Without the participation of young people, the association becomes old and has no future.*

*(Rev Mai Đức Vinh, Chaplain of the Community, 1996)*

*Young people aged 15-25, under the influence of schools and universities, no longer want to live religious life in the Vietnamese way. We have tried in vain to gather them. Some of this age group even began to criticize the community and the priests. The majority of adolescents go to Mass in a French parish and a small number has left the church.*

*(Rev Đinh Đồng Thượng Sách, Assistant Chaplain, 1996)*



However, evidence from the Australian memoirs and questionnaire showed some signs of a similar change in attitudes among the young respondents from the VCCSA with regard to their participation in the groups, as illustrated in the following comments.

*When I was young I joined the Eucharistic Children's Movement for a while but since I began high school I have stopped going.*

*(O. Memoir 22, female, born 1980, arrived in Australia 1981)*

*I was once a member of the church choir, but now due to a busy schedule I no longer have time to participate in any clubs or associations.*

*(O. Memoir 27, female, born 1963, arrived in Australia 1984)*

*Both of my children M and L were in the youth group but because of their studies they now have to stop participating.*

*(O. Memoir 41, male, born 1950, arrived in Australia 1983)*

The above comments showed a general trend among young people in the Catholic community in South Australia, with regard to their participation in community life. A common practice found among Vietnamese Catholic families in South Australia was that when the children were young they went to church regularly with their parents and joined in the activities of the Eucharistic Children's Group and when they became older they joined the Youth Group or the Choir. Most parents wished that their children would continue to be part of these groups and eventually they would find a marriage partner among those they knew in the community. Unfortunately, when children started high school, their interest was shifted to the school community with their teenage friends. However, evidence also showed that a large number of young people within the VCCSA did continue their participation in the group at the same level of commitment as in the case of memoir respondent No 20. In fact, most members of the altar servers' group of the VCCSA joined the group when they were in primary school and continued to be part of the group throughout their secondary and tertiary education years until they graduated from university. Members of the group became best friends and relationships among members of this group changed from a secondary level to a primary level. This situation also applied to members of other groups, such as the Choirs, the Youth Group, the Cursillo movement etc.

The researcher was responsible for the marriage preparation courses organised by the VCCSA for more than ten years until 2003 and evidence from these courses showed that the relationships of half of the couples, who attended these courses, began, flourished and ended in marriage through their participation in the choir or the youth group within the VCCSA. Ten couples within the questionnaire respondents' groups met each other

through their participation in one of the groups. Thus, many families within the VCCSA are now related to each other through their children's marriage.

Members of each group in the VCCSA meet each other at least once or twice a week at the church or in their home group where they pray together and share with each other, at the most intimate level, their spiritual and day to day life experiences. They support each other in their sorrows and joys. If one member of the community dies the whole community comes to the funeral Mass and three consecutive nights of prayer for the deceased following the funeral. In the same way a Vietnamese Catholic wedding is not only a family celebration but also a community celebration as well. The guest list often reaches five or six hundred, many of whom are friends of the parents who are members of the same community. Although a similar group activity structure was found in LMCVP, the bonds among members of the groups were not found to be as strong as those in the VCCSA. Only one couple among the QF group respondents in France had met each other through their participation in the choir of LMCVP. In humanistic sociological terms, the personal social system established by members of the LMCVP appeared to be more characteristic of a secondary social system, while relationships among members of the VCCSA were more of the primary level.

### **Activities Fostering Vietnamese Culture and Language Maintenance**

Evidence obtained from interviews with the chaplains, community reports, newsletters and community constitutions all indicated that both communities had put considerable efforts in providing their members, especially those of the second generation with many opportunities to foster their language and culture. Both communities had adopted similar principles and strategies in order to achieve their cultural objectives. Some of the main strategies are discussed below:

***Vietnamese language school.*** Each community has a Vietnamese language school which offers Vietnamese language lessons to children as part of the community education program every weekend. The detailed examination of these schools in Chapter 5 revealed that participation levels and the educational success of the VCCSA's Đắc Lộ School was much greater compared to that of LMCVP, because of funding support from the Australian government. Each year the VCCSA attracts over \$A50,000 government funding (ESB Report, 2006) for the running costs of Đắc Lộ School while LMCVP language school has to rely on the small contribution of parents to cover the costs. The

funding of ethnic schools such as Đắc Lộ School was the direct result of the multicultural policy in Australia. In contrast, there was no comparable multicultural or community language policy in France at the time of this research.

Evidence showed that both of these schools had helped children to learn the language and parents valued this service greatly. Results of the questionnaire revealed a high percentage of parents among the participants whose children were studying Vietnamese in these schools at the time of questionnaire completion, as shown in the *Table 9.4* below.

*Table 9. 4 Parents with Children Studying Vietnamese*

Respondents	Yes		No		Sub Total		Not Stated	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
QF group	28	76	9	24	37	100	23	38
QAA group	75	77	23	23	98	100	62	39

Both of these schools had helped children to acquire the level of language skills needed in order to participate in community activities and sacramental programs conducted in Vietnamese. It was reported in “Kỷ Yếu 50 Năm”<sup>7</sup> that on average each year 30 children within LMCVP successfully completed the first communion preparation course taught in Vietnamese, while about 80 children within the VCCSA successfully completed this course each year (Tin Yêu, 1995: 46)

Vietnamese language is used exclusively in all community activities. So far, all religious activities, such as the celebrations of Mass, sermons, community prayers, meetings, baptisms, marriages, funerals, retreats and singing have been conducted exclusively in Vietnamese. It was noted that many young children and adults had improved their Vietnamese speaking skill by participating in the choir activities. Several members of the Viet Linh choir of the VCCSA from different backgrounds (one Chinese and one Anglo-Australian) have learnt to speak Vietnamese through the songs that they sing regularly in the church and through interactions with members of the choir.

Religious ceremonies and rituals are conducted according to the Vietnamese traditions, especially in special celebrations such as Christmas, Easter and the Vietnamese New Year Mass. (Refer to photos of religious celebrations of the cultural activities in (Appendices 14 &15)

<sup>7</sup> “Kỷ Yếu 50 Năm” is a special edition of the magazine celebrating 50 years of establishment of LMCVP, published in Paris by LMCVP in 1995.

Printed publications are available in Vietnamese. Both communities have published newsletters and magazines in Vietnamese regularly. “Tin Yêu” is the VCCSA’s weekly newsletter and “Giáo Xứ Việt Nam” is the monthly newsletter published by LMCVP. More than one thousand copies were distributed each time. The aim of these publications was to inform members of liturgical events and community activities but it also served as an educational medium to promote the Catholic faith and the maintenance of Vietnamese language among members. Evidence showed that adult members from both communities found these publications most effective. They enhanced communication among members and enriched their life as individuals and as members of the groups. Both communities also published bilingual magazines to mark special community occasions and annual bilingual reports as a means of promoting the Vietnamese community in the wider society.

**Library.** Each community has a library of books, dictionaries, magazines, music and audio materials in Vietnamese. Most of these materials are on religious matters but there is a high volume of materials on Vietnamese culture, literature and language. However, not many respondents in the questionnaire groups and none of the memoir respondents of the second generation indicated that they had used these materials to improve their Vietnamese language skills or Vietnamese cultural knowledge. So far, the positive influence of these materials on the maintenance and transmission of Vietnamese language and culture among the second generation within these two communities appears to have been limited. The second generation rarely reads these materials because of the difficulty of the language and perhaps because they are not interested in religious books.

As with other Vietnamese community organisations, both of these Catholic communities have faithfully observed all the Vietnamese traditional festivals, such as the Vietnamese New Year, and the Mid-Autumn Festival, because they recognised the importance of these celebrations and considered them as one of the ways to teach their children the Vietnamese culture. It was noted that attendance on these occasions at the VCCSA centre each year was very high (1500 people). In addition to these celebrations, both communities over the years have organised numerous community gatherings where members and their families spend the day together, share a meal and participate in cultural and religious activities. Both communities have also organised many conferences, workshops, speakers, displays, concerts and Vietnamese language classes for non-Vietnamese. These activities have been organised with the aim of promoting

Vietnamese language culture not only among their own community members but also among those of non-Vietnamese background in the wider community.

Most respondents believed that by participating in the activities of their Catholic community regularly they would be able to keep their Catholic faith strong as a group and that their children would have a better chance to form a firm foundation for the development of their Catholic faith in the Vietnamese tradition. A high majority of questionnaire respondents (74-97%) across all three groups believed that the activities of their Catholic community had helped them to maintain the language as illustrated by the results presented in *Table 9.5* below.

*Table 9. 5 Catholic Community Helps Respondents to Maintain Vietnamese*

	Yes		No		Sub Total		Not Stated	
Respondents	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
QF group	52	93	4	7	56	100	4	7
QAA group	148	97	5	3	153	100	7	4
QAY group	101	74	36	26	137	100	43	24

This view was confirmed by all oral memoir respondents who were parents and active members of LMCVF as illustrated by the following comments.

*We should not boast ourselves but must recognise that LMCVP has helped the Vietnamese Catholics in general and those living in the Paris region in particular, by providing them a venue to meet in order to foster their Faith traditions and to maintain their language. (O. Memoir 9, male, born 1957, arrived in France 1980)*

Similar comments were found among many oral memoir respondents from the VCCSA as represented by the following memoir comments.

*The groups within the Vietnamese Catholic community have helped us a lot in maintaining Vietnamese language as we always speak Vietnamese with each other and on weekends we often meet as a group to have fun together. (O. Memoir 25, male, born 1970 arrived in Australia 1987)*

*My Vietnamese language skills and cultural knowledge are quite solid at present thanks to the members of the choir of the Vietnamese Catholic community. When I first came here, I joined the choir immediately and had participated in this group from 1993 until I started university in 1999. As the youngest member of the group, both in age and in life experiences, I had learned a great deal from older members, about faith, the Vietnamese way of life and the Vietnamese language. (O. Memoir 24, female, born 1976, arrived in Australia 1991)*

*I think the Catholic community helps us in two aspects. Firstly, it provides us with a praying environment where we can pray and practise our beliefs. Secondly, the community also has a number of groups where we can join in for example by*

*participating in the choir people can sing and speak in Vietnamese and this helps us to maintain the language. (O. Memoir 41, male, born 1948, arrived in Australia 1983)*

Some believed it was a necessity to participate in groups within the VCCSA as these groups would offer them the opportunity to live the Vietnamese cultural traditions and to improve their language skills.

*The groups within the Catholic community are very necessary for the maintenance of language and culture because when you participate in the activities of the groups, you have the opportunity to speak your mother tongue and to put in practice your cultural traditions. These are precious times for you to practise and improve your language skills. (O. Memoir 38, male, born 1947, arrived in Australia 1992)*

However, a marked difference between the young respondents in the QAY group and the adult respondents in the QAA group was noted. Forty-three QAY respondents did not respond to this question, and a quarter of those who responded did not think that their Vietnamese Catholic community activities had helped them to maintain the language. This showed that the second generation of Vietnamese were not as certain as their parents' generation about the positive effect that a religious community organisation could have on the maintenance of the Vietnamese language for the future.

The results of the question seeking the opinions of parent respondents on the impact of the Vietnamese Catholic community on their children's language maintenance, presented in *Table 9.6* below indicated that most respondents, 95% of QF group in France and 97% of QAA group in Australia, strongly believed that the activities of their Catholic community had had a positive effect on their children's language maintenance.

**Table 9. 6 Catholic Community Helps Respondents' Children to Maintain Vietnamese**

	Yes		No		Sub Total		Not Stated	
Respondents	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
QF group	36	95	2	5	38	100	22	37
QAA group	121	97	4	3	125	100	35	22

They believed that by participating in community activities conducted in Vietnamese, their children would learn how to speak Vietnamese and to put in practice the Vietnamese cultural and religious values. As was clear from *Table 9.6*, a number of their children in the QAY group did not agree.

It should be pointed out that this question was not included in the questionnaire for the QAY group, as it was deemed to be irrelevant to this group because of their young age.

Those, who did not respond to this question, were not married at the time and therefore, thought that this question was not applicable to their situation.

### **Activities Supporting Integration into the Host Society**

Helping Vietnamese Catholics to integrate into the mainstream society of the host countries was evident in the activities of both communities. However, this particular objective was only found explicitly in the Constitution of the VCCSA.

*To maintain and develop simultaneously the Vietnamese language, cultural and spiritual values and to help each other to integrate well into the Australia society (VCCSA's Constitution, Ch 1, 2.2.)*

It appeared that both communities provided similar assistance to the refugees in order to help them in the process of settlement and integration into the host society. LMCVF being a more established community was in a better position to assist the refugees than the VCCSA. There was a certain condescending attitude on the part of the well-educated Vietnamese in the community towards the refugees from the late 1970's who could not speak French and knew little about French culture and a hidden fear that these refugees and their children might damage the reputation of the Vietnamese community in France by their inappropriate behaviour. Therefore, leaders of LMCVF made it a priority mission of the community at the time to help the refugees to integrate into the French society as quickly as possible. LMCVF immediately established a welfare office providing emergency assistance and job seeking opportunities for hundreds of newly arrived boat people from Vietnam. It also organised French language classes for the refugees to learn the language and culture of the host society. Several studies on the adaptation of the Vietnamese in France (Lê Hữu Khoa, 1985, Ngô Quang Kiệt, 1996) acknowledged the important role of LMCVF in helping the Vietnamese refugees to resettle in France from the late 1970's until the early 1990's. LMCVF's social welfare office was administered by a Vietnamese nun, Sister Therese H. Below was her account on the work of the office.

*When the first wave of Vietnamese refugees reached France, LMCVF decided to establish a social welfare office to assist those who arrived here with nothing except their bare hands. We offered emergency assistance such as clothes, food and small amounts of money to them. Later on, we focused on issues of integration. We organised French classes for those who did not know French so that they could find a job, become an apprentice or go to university. We are still providing that right now. There are about twenty to twenty-five teachers who come here to teach every week; an average of five teachers a day. They all volunteer to work here and most of them are French. (Text translated from Vietnamese, a social worker of LMCVF, 2003)*

Helping the refugee children to integrate or even assimilate into the French culture and society was more prominent in the agenda of LMCVF than that of the VCCSA. One of the activities organised by LMCVF welfare office was to place the children of Vietnamese refugee families into French families during the week and during the summer holiday periods so that they could learn the language and learn to be French. These children were separated from their parents and other siblings for the whole week, and they were allowed to come home at weekends only. It was proudly reported in 1994 that the LMCVF welfare office was successful in placing 30 children of refugee families into French families during that summer school holiday and that every year refugee children (aged 1 to 12) were sent to live with French families during the school year for limited periods of time in order to integrate them into the French way of life (Mai Đức Vinh, 1995). The leaders of LMCVF at the time probably thought it was the best way to help the refugee children to have a future in France, without realising the terrible cost they might have to pay later on in their life; the cost of losing their culture and their own identity. The underlying message here was that to be able to succeed in France one had to forego one's family, one's culture and become a "Tây con (a little French)". This could be interpreted as perhaps the leaders of LMCVF were unconsciously accepting the French imperialist mentality, which claimed the superiority of French culture over Vietnamese culture.

In Australia, Vietnamese parents have never felt the need to send their children to live with an Australian family in order to learn English or to learn the Australian way of life. The leaders of VCCSA would never have supported such a program. They have always promoted integration within a framework of multiculturalism which is based on a fundamental principle that every culture is equally valuable and that each culture should be respected and maintained not only for the benefit of the ethnic group concerned but for the good of the whole society. Like the LMCVP, the VCCSA organised special English classes for the elderly and women to learn the official language of Australia. It also offered orientation programs for the newly arrived Vietnamese migrants to learn about Australian ways of life. These programs helped the Vietnamese to learn appropriate skills and knowledge in order to live and work in Australia. For a number of years, VCCSA was funded by the Government to offer a "work for the dole" program helping young unemployed Vietnamese to learn English and other skills so that they could find a job later on. The network of support among members of the VCCSA community proved to be one of the most effective ways through which the community helped its members to



become self-sufficient and to integrate into the Australian way of life. An informational social network was naturally formed among group members. Through this network, members helped each other to find jobs, to buy houses, and to send children to appropriate schools.

Although the VCCSA has never had an official social welfare office funded by the government like other Vietnamese organisations such as the Vietnamese community in Australia/SA Chapter or the Indo-Chinese Women's Association, it has provided a valuable service helping not only its own members but also any other Vietnamese migrants and refugees to resettle in South Australia successfully. All social, cultural and educational programs organised by the VCCSA have always been open to all South-Australians regardless of their cultural or religious backgrounds. Evidence showed that all twenty-four adult oral memoir respondents (Nos 22; 24; 25; 26; 24; 28; 32; 34; 35; 36; 37; 38; 39; 40; 41; 42; 43; 44; 45; 46; 49; 52; 53; 54) who were members of the VCCSA and who were married with children had managed to achieve a high degree of economic security at the time of interview. They all owned a good family home and enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle. Cultural integration seemed to be much harder to achieve than economic integration for first generation Vietnamese. Evidence showed that some memoir respondents (Nos 26; 27; 28; 52; 53) who were engaged in professional jobs still did not feel fully accepted into the cultural life of the host society. These respondents confirmed that the Vietnamese Catholic community had helped them and their children considerably when they first came to Australia. The community had provided them with both social and spiritual support so that they could resettle quickly and rebuild their life in Australia.

### **Connections with the mainstream church**

One way of helping the Vietnamese Catholics to integrate into the life of the church in Australia was the participation of the community in annual liturgical events organised by the diocese such as the Marian procession which is an annual diocesan event organised by the local church community in honour of Mary or the migrant Mass at the Cathedral. The VCCSA has always participated in these celebrations in great number and has also taken turns in the organisation of these events with other migrant communities. The Catholic church in Australia is claimed to be a multicultural church. A Catholic Multicultural Office of the Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide was established in 1990 with the aim of providing pastoral care services helping migrants and refugees to

integrate into the life of the church in Adelaide. There was no comparable structure or events in the organisation of the local church in France so members of LMCVF did not have the opportunity to be involved in the diocesan celebrations with other migrant communities in the same way as those in Australia.

In summary, this comparison of the organisational structure and the activity programs between the VCCSA and LMCVF has shown more similarities than differences. It was evident that members of both communities recognised a close connection between faith, culture and language. They believed that transmission of the Vietnamese language and culture to their children was vital to the transmission of their Catholic faith to future generations of Vietnamese in Australia and in France. Therefore, both communities had put time and resources into helping their children to learn the language by sending them to Vietnamese language school and encouraging them to participate in the activities of the groups and movements within the church community.

Participation in religious and cultural activities of members from the VCCSA by proportion was greater than those of LMCVP, especially among young members. The bonds and relationships among members of the VCCSA appeared to be stronger than among those of the LMCVP because of factors such as circumstances, geographical distance and the membership composition of the two communities.

It was evident that both communities had achieved their principal aim which was to provide the opportunity for the Vietnamese Catholics to live their Catholic faith in a culturally appropriate environment. So far, the success of transmitting these faith traditions to the second generation seem to have been more prominent in Australia than in France. Both communities had successfully helped their members, especially those of first generation migrants, to adapt to new ways of life in the host countries but at the same time, to maintain their Vietnamese cultural and linguistic heritage. Respondents' self-reported levels of integration presented in *Table 9.7* below give some indication of the success of these communities in this respect.

*Table 9.7 Respondents' Self-reported Levels of Integration*

	Fully		Partly		Not at all		Total	
Respondents	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
QF group	19	32	41	68	0	0	60	100
QAA group	29	18	129	81	2	1	160	100
QAY group	103	57	77	43	0	0	180	100

Results of *Table 9.7* showed that almost all the participants felt that they had fully or partly been integrated into the life of the host society. Only two respondents in this study reported that they did not integrate *at all*. Those who reported themselves as *fully integrated* were mainly among the second and generation 1.5. More of the QF group in France as compared to the QAA group in Australia reported as being fully integrated. This may reflect the fact that many of the QAA group in Australia did not feel the need to be fully integrated or assimilated into the Australian mainstream society.

Community life within these Vietnamese Catholic communities, whether in France or in Australia, was much more vibrant than that of mainstream parishes of the host countries. Sunday Mass attendance in a mainstream parish whether in France or Australia was very low compared with that of the Vietnamese community. Mainstream parish activities no longer attract young people, whereas the Vietnamese Catholic communities in Australia and to a lesser degree in France are still able to attract participation of a considerable number of young people in both cultural and religious activities of their community (refer to photos illustrating participation of members in the activities of LMCVP (Appendix 14) and the VCCSA (Appendix 15). These activities had greatly strengthened the bonds among Vietnamese Catholic migrants in both countries and helped them to maintain their language and culture, as well as their Catholic faith traditions.

In humanistic sociological terms, these two communities had in fact functioned in a similar way to a big extended family system in Vietnam where significant relationships among members were formed at both primary and secondary levels. The bonds among members have helped the group to establish for themselves a strong community with a distinctive set of cultural and religious values. Their religious values are in fact Christian values but embedded in the Vietnamese culture.

Both communities proved to be resilient and effective in their cultural maintenance endeavours. In the absence of a national multicultural policy like Australia, LMCVP had a more difficult task trying to raise funds in support of its educational and cultural programs to help its young members to maintain Vietnamese linguistic and cultural values compared to the VCCSA. However, both communities have had the tenacity to resist social and political pressure from the dominant host culture to become cultural strongholds which individual members can draw upon in the construction of their personal systems of social values and to build up their personal cultural identity. The

question of personal and group cultural identity of the Vietnamese in Australia and in France is examined in the following section.

## **Personal Cultural Identity**

Consistent with the theoretical positions adopted in this study, the emphasis is again on the respondents' own perceptions of the constituent elements of their identity. Although it is recognised that identity is an infinitely complex and multi-layered phenomenon, which may involve psychological, structural, religious or even political elements, the focus here is on its cultural aspects. Cultural values are the key components of ethnic identity.

The analysis of this section takes into account the generational divide, the assumption here being that although cultural values may have evolved in the meantime, the cultural identities of the first generation Vietnamese were shaped in the years of their childhood and youth in Vietnam. Generation 1.5, on the other hand, straddled two cultural worlds in their formative years: that of their country of birth, Vietnam and that of the host society (France or Australia). The second generation had readier and more extensive access to cultural values of the host country through the school system, but access to Vietnamese cultural values through the home and the Vietnamese communities. It is the second generation, therefore, which had access to more than one cultural stock for the construction of the personal systems of values which formed their cultural identities. How individuals define themselves culturally is one of the ways through which they express their desire to be culturally associated with a particular cultural group and their willingness to adopt the groups' core cultural values in the construction of their own personal cultural identity. With these considerations in mind, the following section is focussed on the analysis of the respondents' sense of self-identification at the time of the data gathering.

## **Self-Identification**

In order to find out the respondents' perceptions on their own cultural identity in the context of their relevant host society, all questionnaire respondents were asked to identify themselves by choosing one of the labels (*Vietnamese, Vietnamese-Australian, Vietnamese-French, Australian or French*) which they felt most comfortable with. The results of this question are presented in the following *Table 9.8*.

**Table 9. 8 Respondents' Self- Identification**

	Vietnamese		Vietnamese - Australian		Australian		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Respondents</b>								
<b>QAA group</b>	33	<b>21</b>	127	<b>79</b>	0	<b>0</b>	160	<b>100</b>
<b>QAY group</b>	48	<b>27</b>	125	<b>69</b>	7	<b>4</b>	180	<b>100</b>

	Vietnamese		Vietnamese - French		French		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
<b>Respondents</b>								
<b>QF group</b>	28	<b>47</b>	32	<b>53</b>	0	<b>0</b>	60	<b>100</b>

The difficulty of using a limited number of labels (three in this case) as a way of analysing cultural identity was acknowledged here because labels do not always reflect the true meaning or the complexity of a person's identity. Personal identity is not a static object which can be measured easily. Individuals can change and so do their identities. However, the results of questionnaires presented in *Table 9.8* supported by comments from memoirs do reveal some insights into the individuals' choice and perceptions of their personal cultural identities.

#### ***Identified as Vietnamese-Australian or Vietnamese-French***

*Table 9.8* shows a large majority (69-79%) of respondents from Australia (QAA and QAY groups) thought of themselves as *Vietnamese-Australian* and more than half of those from France (QF group) considered themselves as half *Vietnamese* and half *French*.

The Vietnamese in Australia are accustomed to being placed under hyphenated titles according to their language background. Australia's emergence as a multicultural nation in the post-war era produced a heightened sense of ethnic consciousness to the extent that "Australian" has come to be regarded by some first generation migrants with cultural origins elsewhere, as more descriptive of their citizenship status than of their cultural identity. This label was seen by some commentators (O'Farrell, 1993) as an unfortunate product of the multicultural policies. However, the results suggest that the Vietnamese in Australia as well as those in France, where multicultural policies have never existed, had no problem with this hyphenated label. The results also indicated that this label was equally acceptable among second generation Vietnamese in Australia. It is possible that for the Vietnamese this label connects them well with their own cultural roots, a culture which they are proud of. It suggests a cultural composite nature of identity and offers a way of being Australian, without losing the ethnic cultural connection which was of vital

importance to the participants of this study. *Vietnamese–Australian* is a title commonly used by politicians and Vietnamese leaders in their official speeches and documents. All memoir respondents of second generation in Australia preferred to be known as *Vietnamese-Australians*.

*I would like to be classified as a Vietnamese-Australian or more precisely an Australian with Vietnamese blood. I'm happy of my background and I enjoy being multicultural. (O. Memoir 20, male, Y 12 student, born in Australia)*

### ***Identified as Vietnamese***

It was surprising to discover from the results of *Table 9.8* that the percentage of those who considered themselves as *Vietnamese* was higher among respondents from France (47%) than those from Australia (21-27%). This does not necessarily mean that respondents from France were more concerned about keeping their Vietnamese cultural identity than those in Australia nor that they felt more comfortable being Vietnamese in France than being Vietnamese in Australia. It is likely that, in the absence of a multicultural policy, like that in Australia, which educates migrants to identify themselves in a particular way, Vietnamese migrants in France were perhaps more familiar with being known as *Vietnamese*. It was clear that all those who identified themselves as *Vietnamese* were of first generation or generation 1.5 migrants in France and in Australia. Memoir evidence showed that the respondents from both countries were equally proud of their Vietnamese cultural identity as represented in the following memoir comments.

*I am very proud of my identity as a Vietnamese, and wherever I go I always say that I am Vietnamese, and especially that I am Catholic as well. I am very proud of these two attributes. (O. Memoir 10, male, born 1936, arrived in France 1984)*

*I have been here (France) for 10 years. I always consider myself as a Vietnamese and I always let people know that I was born in Vietnam and that my main language is Vietnamese. I told them straight that at home I never speak French, I speak Vietnamese only. French is the language that I have to speak in order to live and survive in France. (O. Memoir 7, male, born 1949, arrived in France 1979)*

*Personally, I am very proud of being Vietnamese because we have been through that war in Vietnam which made the whole world know about us and our country. I think that over the years, Vietnamese people have contributed, integrated and worked well here in the Australian society where people have learnt to appreciate our culture. (O. Memoir 41, male, born 1950, arrived in Australia 1983)*

*As for me, I am always proud of being Vietnamese, especially being a Vietnamese woman and I take great pride in the fact that I am able to maintain my mother tongue, Vietnamese. When I am out in the street people often ask if I can speak Vietnamese and my answer is "Yes of course I do".*

*(O. Memoir 24, female, born 1976, arrived in Australia 1991)*

It was noted that several memoir respondents of the second generation from Australia felt strongly that their real cultural identity was *Vietnamese*, but a Vietnamese born in Australia. Australia is their birthplace but culturally they felt Vietnamese because of the ways they lived in their family environment. Vietnamese parents in Australia and in France to a lesser degree, had always taught their children to be proud of their cultural heritage.

*If someone asks me who I am, my first reply would be I'm Vietnamese but born in Australia. I think it's important for young Vietnamese people to keep the Vietnamese traditions. That is what makes them unique and different and not to lose the fact that they're Vietnamese. (O. Memoir 19, female, Y11 student born in Australia)*

*I'm proud to be a Vietnamese person because of the way I am and the things that have turned out for me. You've just got to be proud of who you are.*  
(O. Memoir 15, male, Y11 student born in Australia)

### ***Identified as Australian or French***

Results of *Table 9.8* indicate that none of the respondents from France saw themselves as *French* and only a very small number (4%) of those in Australia saw themselves as *Australian* and of course all of those who chose to be known as *Australian* were born in Australia. There could be several reasons explaining why so few participants, even among the second generation, chose to be known as *French* or *Australian*, such as their pride and loyalty to their cultural origins, their feelings of being accepted or rejected by the host society and the satisfaction about their lives in the host countries. It could be argued that because of their loyalty to the Vietnamese culture, most of the participants did not want to identify themselves as *French* or *Australian*, as in doing so they could be seen by other Vietnamese as publicly denying or rejecting their own cultural heritage. A Vietnamese who rejects his/her own cultural origin is considered as “mất gốc”. Literally this expression means that the person has completely lost his/her roots. Children who are classified as “mất gốc” would bring shame to themselves and their families. This may explain why so few participants (4%) in the questionnaire group and none of the memoir respondents considered themselves as solely *Australian* and none in France identified themselves as *French*.

The overwhelming positive responses to the question “are you proud of your Vietnamese background?” from the questionnaire respondents, presented in *Table 9.9* below seemed to support the argument that regardless of their choice of a label for their identity, participants across all three groups took great pride in their Vietnamese cultural origins.

*Table 9. 9 Proud of Vietnamese Background*

Respondents	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>QF group</b>	60	<b>100</b>	0	<b>0</b>	60	<b>100</b>
<b>QAA group</b>	160	<b>100</b>	0	<b>0</b>	160	<b>100</b>
<b>QAY group</b>	180	<b>100</b>	0	<b>0</b>	180	<b>100</b>

### *Physical Appearance and Identity*

Some participants thought that their physical appearance was the obvious visual marker of their identity and that this physical trademark would prevent them from being seen as fully “*French or Australian*”, regardless of their level of integration into the culture of the host society. Whether they wanted it or not, in the eyes of Westerners they were always seen as belonging to the Asian cultural group as opposite to the Western cultural group which happened to be the dominant group of the host countries (Australia and France). In general, Vietnamese people do not like to be known as “Asians” or to be mistaken for a Chinese or Japanese, because of personal pride in their own culture, as expressed in the following memoir comments by a young Vietnamese who came to Australia when she was only nine years old.

*I am very honoured to be Vietnamese and I take great pride in my cultural origin. Sometimes people have mistaken me for a Chinese or Japanese person because of my physical appearance but I have always told them that I am Vietnamese.*

*(O. Memoir 22, female, born 1980, arrived in Australia 1989)*

The question of physical characteristics or race as markers of personal identity or barriers of cultural integration was not intended to be examined by this thesis. Therefore, there was no specific question in the main questionnaire or memoir interview questions seeking evidence to that effect.

### *Identity in the Second Generation*

Authors such as Lê Hữu Khoa (1985) and Ngô Quang Kiệt (1996) claimed that those who felt confident about their Vietnamese cultural heritage had the tendency to identify themselves as *Vietnamese* and they were usually of first generation migrants. On the other hand, those who encountered identity crises were usually to be found among children of mixed marriages or of the second generation. They often felt a sense of being at the edge of two cultures, belonging neither to the Vietnamese nor the French culture.



*Nous sommes souvent qualifiés de “tây con” à la maison, chaque fois que nos parents ne nous comprennent pas, ou qu’ils jugent que nous ne comportons pas comme ils le veulent.*

*We are often called “a little French” at home, each time our parents do not understand us or they complain that we do not behave in a way that they want us to be. (21 Years old medical student, Lê Hữu Khoa, 1985:95-96)*

*Nous ne sommes ni Vietnamiens, ni Français. A la maison nous subissons l’éducation vietnamienne mais nous ne sentons pas Vietnamiens. En compagnie des Français nous sentons que nous ne sommes pas Français.*

*We are neither Vietnamese nor French. At home, we are submitted to the Vietnamese education but we do not feel Vietnamese. In the company of the French, we feel that we are not French. (19 Years old engineering student, Ngô Quang Kiệt, 1996: 108)*

However, the above sentiment was not found to be prominent among the participants of this study, especially those from Australia. All of the 24 second generation memoir respondents from Australia expressed confidence and pride in their Vietnamese cultural identity. There was no feeling of shame or confusion about their identities as Vietnamese-Australians. It could be argued that this positive attitude has occurred as a result of living in a multicultural society where the Vietnamese culture and language had a more recognised status in society than in France and that Vietnamese parents in Australia paid more attention in teaching their children about the importance of their cultural heritage than those in France, as reflected in the following memoir comments from a Vietnamese parent who was also a teacher of Vietnamese in South Australian schools for many years.

*My children are very proud of their Vietnamese identity. They are not ashamed of being Vietnamese at all because I have always reminded them of their Vietnamese origin. I have also taught my students the same thing. Identity is the first thing I teach all of my Vietnamese students at school. They would be lost without knowing their true identity. (O. Memoir 31, male, born 1946, arrived in Australia 1986)*

Thus, evidence from both the memoirs and the questionnaires revealed an overwhelming sense of confidence and pride in their cultural heritage among the respondents of both first and second generations in Australia and in France. However, second generation respondents in Australia seemed to be much more confident about their personal cultural identity than those in France.

## **Conclusion**

Evidence from this Chapter indicates clearly that the social and cultural life among the Vietnamese in Australia and in France is still very much alive and active thanks to the dynamics of a rich and complex network of social systems created by numerous Vietnamese ethnic organisations established in the host countries since 1975. In this study, the social and cultural life of the participants, most of whom were Catholics, evolved around two main social systems, namely, the primary social system of the family and the secondary social system of their relevant Vietnamese Catholic communities.

Results of a detailed comparative analysis of the two Catholic communities (VCCSA and LMCVP) revealed that each community, in its own way, has had a strong influence on the social, cultural and religious life of the participants who belonged to these communities. In humanistic sociological terms, these two communities have in fact functioned as social systems where significant relationships among members were formed at both primary and secondary levels. The success of members' participation in religious services and community activities regularly and faithfully has strengthened the bonds among members; further enhanced the group cohesion and consequently, helped the group to establish a strong group identity with a distinctive set of linguistic, cultural and religious values. Their religious values are in fact Christian values but embedded in Vietnamese culture.

Evidence also indicated that both communities proved to be effective agents for integration and cultural adaptation into the host society, but they were also resilient in their language and culture maintenance and transmission endeavours. However, it could be argued that in the absence of a national multicultural policy like that in Australia, the Vietnamese Catholic community in Paris (LMCVP) compared to the VCCSA, had a more difficult task in achieving their goals of helping its younger members to maintain Vietnamese linguistic and cultural values. Consequently, the success of transmitting these core cultural values to younger members of LMCVP was less evident compared to that of the VCCSA.

In terms of the theory of social systems outlined in Chapter 3, it could be argued that the group social systems represented by the Vietnamese ethnic organisations, especially the Catholic organisations were important repositories of Vietnamese cultural values for the construction of the respondents' personal social systems. Evidence revealed that these

organisations have had the tenacity to resist social and political pressure from the dominant host culture to become cultural strongholds which individual members can draw upon in the construction of their personal cultural systems. As social systems, these organisations have played a vital role in the formation of the respondents' cultural identity both as individuals and as a group in France and in Australia. It was evident that Vietnamese migrants in Australia and in France have been recognised as a group of people with a strong distinctive cultural identity, a group of people who had the capacity to adapt quickly to the ways of life in their respective host societies and became successful citizens of the host country but at the same time determined not to lose their group's core cultural values.

## **SECTION V: CONCLUSIONS, POLICY IMPLICATIONS & FURTHER RESEARCH**

## Chapter 10: Concluding Discussions

### ***Introduction***

This qualitative research study compared two communities of Vietnamese Catholic immigrants, one in Adelaide and the other in Paris, in relation to their maintenance and transmission of Vietnamese language and culture. In this concluding Chapter the four research questions posed in Chapter 1 are answered on the basis of findings from the concrete and cultural data collected from both communities and analysed according to humanistic sociological principles discussed in Chapters 3 & 4. At the same time, the significance of the findings are interpreted in terms of the cultural adaptation theories outlined in Chapter 2.

### ***Findings in Response to Research Question 1***

#### **Vietnamese Language: Maintenance, Transmission or Shift**

The issue of Vietnamese language maintenance, transmission or shift was explored in Chapters 6 & 7 in response to research question 1.

*To what extent was Vietnamese language being transmitted and maintained, or lost through shift to another language, among the participants from the Vietnamese Catholic community in Adelaide, as compared with those from the Vietnamese Catholic community in Paris?*

The three aspects of language experience (language proficiency, usage and attitudes) which provided fundamental information and insights into the processes of language maintenance and transmission among the respondents were examined in Chapters 6 & 7. It was assumed that language proficiency was surely the starting point. A language, quite simply, cannot be maintained or transmitted unless there are those who can understand and speak it; equally important for its long term survival and secure transmission, writing and reading skills in the language must be maintained as well.

**Language proficiency.** Findings from Chapter 6, based on the tables, charts and memoir comments show that, within the limit of the participants studied, the Vietnamese language maintenance level was very strong among respondents of first generation Vietnamese immigrants in both Adelaide and Paris. Chart 6.8 indicates that an exceptionally high percentage of first generation participants from both communities

claimed that they could understand, speak, read and write Vietnamese "very well" or "well". Adelaide results ranged from 98% to 87%, while Paris was slightly lower, from 88% to 85% (Chart 6.8). A high proportion of these participants therefore can be said to have well developed Vietnamese linguistic skills which they had learnt in Vietnam and maintained to a high degree over many years of their life in the host country. These figures show the overall high level of Vietnamese proficiency of the first generation participants in all four macro linguistic skills; Adelaide was around 10% higher than those in Paris. This could be interpreted as Vietnamese language maintenance level was slightly greater among first generation participants from Adelaide than those from Paris at the time of this study.

In addition to Vietnamese language proficiency, the participants of first generation reported a good level of competence in the language of the host countries (French and English) ranging from 74% to 70% (Chart 6.6) for the Paris participants and from 60% to 57% (Chart 6.3) for the Adelaide participants. These figures mean that over half of the Adelaide participants, and almost three quarters of the Paris participants, had developed linguistic skills of the host countries, at a competent level in English or French respectively.

**With regard to Vietnamese language usage**, this same group of first generation participants reported that they used Vietnamese exclusively among themselves. Results from Chapter 6 show that the majority of the first generation participants in Paris and in Adelaide, who were competent in the language of the host countries (French and English), still preferred to use Vietnamese to communicate with other Vietnamese persons, because they considered it the proper way to behave. It was a sign of respect for the other Vietnamese person, as well as an expression of pride in their Vietnamese cultural identity, and demonstrating their positive attitudes to the Vietnamese language. All of the first generation participants said that they wanted to maintain Vietnamese and almost all claimed to encourage their children to speak it.

**Language shift among first generation participants:** Results from Chapter 6 show almost no evidence of language shift or Vietnamese language loss among those who arrived in the host country after the age of twelve. There was none in the first generation participant groups either in Adelaide or in Paris, who reported that they could not speak or understand Vietnamese. Their Vietnamese linguistic competence and usage patterns enabled them to use Vietnamese exclusively in all domains of their daily life; in the

home, in their social life with members of the Vietnamese community, in their religious life in the Vietnamese Catholic community, where they attended Mass, prayers and community events. All of the linguistic data pointed clearly to the conclusion that the Vietnamese language enjoyed a very high status in the home, as well as in the Vietnamese community outside the home, among the first generation of Vietnamese immigrant participants in both the Adelaide and Paris communities at the time of this study. There was no evidence of language shift to English or French among the first generation participants. In addition, however, most had learned the language of their host country, as indicated above. As a result, many were competent bilinguals, able to function effectively in mainstream work situations and the wider society, as well as in their Vietnamese family and community situations.

**For the second generation**, data collected came only from Adelaide participants who constituted a select group of young people who were learning Vietnamese at one of the schools then teaching Vietnamese in the Adelaide metropolitan area. It was not possible to gather a comparable group of participants in Paris where Vietnamese language study program up to Year 12 level was only available through private tuition. Chart 7.6 shows that three quarters of the second generation Adelaide participants understood or spoke Vietnamese “very well” or “well”, while half claimed the same level of proficiency in reading and writing. These figures from Chapter 7 show clearly that the Vietnamese language proficiency, including literacy, of these second generation Vietnamese participants in Adelaide was at a competent level. The Vietnamese language was used by over 80%, according to Chart 7.7, as a means to communicate within the home with parents, grand-parents, as well as being the language of public communication in domains such as Vietnamese community events, church services and Vietnamese ethnic schools. With regard to their English proficiency, over 90% of second generation participants claimed to be very good or good in all four linguistic skills in English, as a result of their years of learning in Australian schools.

In relation to language attitudes, the Adelaide group of second generation participants also expressed strongly positive attitudes to Vietnamese, with 97% wanting to maintain Vietnamese and over three quarters considering that it was “very important” to be able to speak Vietnamese. Overall, this group of participants gave evidence of being bilingual, although they were not as competent in their Vietnamese literacy language skills as the parental generation. Their linguistic proficiency and usage favoured English, because of

their greater involvement in mainstream societal structures, such as schools. However, it was noted that some clear signs of language attrition in Vietnamese and shift to English among these second generation Vietnamese-Australian young people were apparent, especially when they communicated with their siblings and peers. It could be predicted that the degree of language shift to English or French among the Vietnamese of second and third generations both in Australia and in France would be much greater. However, this assumption needs to be examined through further research on the same topic.

Smolicz (1979) suggested that one of the key factors which caused differentiation in the degree of language shift between ethnic groups was the value placed by group members on the language itself. Thus, those groups which considered language to be a core cultural value, such as the Poles, showed greater language maintenance than those who did not. It was clear from this study that the participants from both generations placed a very high value and status on Vietnamese as their mother tongue. The findings of Chapter 6 & 7 indicated that Vietnamese language were very important to the Vietnamese of both first and second generations. It played a vital role in forming the Vietnamese group identity, connecting people of the same cultural background from wherever they live, especially with those in Vietnam. Vietnamese language is indeed a very important cultural value, and is a sign of solidarity and unity among people of Vietnamese cultural background all over the world.

In addition, questionnaire and memoir responses quoted in Chapters 6 & 7 indicated that Vietnamese parents in Adelaide were more committed to the ideology and processes which contributed to the success of Vietnamese language being successfully maintained and transmitted to their children than those in Paris.

Evidence from Chapters 6 & 7 also showed that the proficiency and usage patterns among the respondents were for the most part consistent with their reported attitudes towards the Vietnamese language. There was, however, a closer correlation between attitudes and tendencies, or attitudes and activation, with regard to the Vietnamese linguistic values among respondents from Adelaide than those from Paris.

With regard to the issues of Vietnamese language maintenance and shift, the overall findings from the Adelaide participants in this research were consistent with the results of Clyne's (2005) study which claimed that there was a very high rate of Vietnamese



language maintenance and low rate of language shift among Vietnamese immigrants in Australia at the time of his research, which happened to coincide with the time of this study as well.

## ***Findings in Response to Research Question 2***

The second research question posed in Chapter 1 concerned the role of the family and community organisations, especially the Catholic community, in the maintenance of Vietnamese language and culture among the participants in Adelaide compared to those in Paris. Below is research question 2

*What was the impact of family life and community organisations, especially Catholic communities, on the participants' cultural adaptation patterns and their cultural identity in Adelaide compared to those in Paris?*

## **Impact of Vietnamese Family on Cultural Adaptation Patterns**

As demonstrated in detailed analysis of data in Chapter 8, that family as a primary social structure was at the centre of the participants' life whether they were in Adelaide or Paris. Although there were small differences between the respondents from Paris and those from Adelaide in their patterns of family life and interactions, memoir evidence and questionnaire responses showed that both immigrant groups were consistent in their attitudes towards the maintenance of Vietnamese family values as markers of their personal and group cultural systems. Some aspects of the extended family structure, roles and relationships were changing and will continue to change as part of the migration adaptation process of the Vietnamese immigrant families in both contexts. The collectivist orientation to family life was still very much evident but expressed in different ways. Evidence from the parents' generation both from Adelaide and Paris demonstrated that they endeavoured to teach their children the practice of Vietnamese collectivist family values in the hope that these will continue to be maintained and transmitted to future generations of Vietnamese in Adelaide and in Paris. However, the Adelaide parents appeared to be more successful in their efforts than those in Paris.

With regard to marriage patterns, results showed that the preferred pattern for both Adelaide and Paris groups was in-group marriage to another Vietnamese. This would help to protect and strengthen the Vietnamese family values in both communities.

Chapter 8 also considered the extent to which the Vietnamese family system had contributed to the respondents' cultural adaptation and influenced the construction of their personal and collective cultural identity in Adelaide and Paris. The findings showed that

- The cultural life of the Vietnamese family proved to be vibrant in both Catholic communities through the maintenance of extended family traditions, customs and celebrations such as weddings, funerals, anniversaries of deceased members of the family in much simpler ways.
- Family separation, disruption as the consequence of dangerous escape journeys and life in refugee camps, among the Vietnamese refugee groups, had serious impact on the social and psychological well-being of family members but the family reunion scheme adopted by the governments in both countries at the time, had helped to restore the structure and cohesion of many Vietnamese family units in Adelaide and in Paris. However, the Adelaide group seemed to have stronger collectivist values in their relationships and organisational structure compared with those in Paris.
- There was strong evidence of family generational conflicts (between parents and second generation children) arising from their ideological differences (collectivism of the traditional Vietnamese family adopted by parents versus the individualism of the western nuclear family system that many second generation Vietnamese would prefer to have. However, the support system for helping to resolve such problems was more readily available for families in Adelaide than those in Paris.
- Strong evidence in the memoirs from both communities indicated that the Vietnamese family was an important agent for the successful integration of its members into the mainstream society but at the same time to maintain their language and culture.

This success was partly due to each individual's determination and hard work and the support of their family.

- Finally, the Vietnamese family was shown to be a most effective agent for language and culture maintenance and transmission in both countries. However, Vietnamese parents in Adelaide were found to be more committed to their children learning Vietnamese language and culture than those in Paris. This has been discussed in response to research question 1 earlier.

## **Impact of Vietnamese Organisations on Cultural Adaptation**

The findings from Chapter 9 indicated clearly that the social and cultural life among the Vietnamese Catholic communities in Adelaide and Paris was very much alive and active at the time of the research, thanks to the dynamic, rich and complex network of social systems created by numerous Vietnamese ethnic organisations, established in the host countries since 1975. In this study, the social and cultural life of the participants revolved around two main social systems, namely, the primary social system of the family and the secondary social system of their relevant Vietnamese Catholic communities.

Results of a detailed comparative analysis of the two Catholic communities (VCCSA and LMCVP) revealed that each community, in its own way, had had a strong influence on the social, cultural and religious life of the participants who belonged to these communities. In humanistic sociological terms, these two communities had, in fact functioned as social systems where significant relationships among members were formed at both primary and secondary levels. The success of members' participation in religious services and community activities regularly and faithfully, had strengthened the bonds among members; further enhanced the group's cohesion and consequently, helped the establishment of a strong group identity with a distinctive set of linguistic, cultural and religious values. Their religious values were in fact Catholic Christian values, but embedded in the Vietnamese culture.

Evidence also indicated that although both communities proved to be effective agents for integration and cultural adaptation into the host society, they were also resilient in their language and culture maintenance and transmission endeavours. However, it could be argued that in the absence of a national multicultural policy like that in Australia, the Vietnamese Catholic Community in Paris (LMCVP) compared to the Catholic Community in South Australia (VCCSA), had a more difficult task in achieving their goals of helping its younger members to maintain Vietnamese linguistic and cultural values. Consequently, the success of transmitting these core cultural values to younger members of LMCVP was less evident compared to those of the VCCSA.

In terms of the theory of social systems outlined in Chapter 3, it could be argued that the group social systems represented by the Vietnamese ethnic organisations, especially the Catholic organisations, were important repositories of Vietnamese cultural values for the construction of the respondents' personal social systems. Evidence revealed that these organisations had the tenacity to resist social and political pressure from the dominant

host culture to become cultural strongholds which individual members could draw upon in the construction of their personal cultural systems. As social systems, these organisations played a vital role in the formation of the respondents' cultural identity both as individuals and as a group in Paris and in Adelaide. It was evident that Vietnamese immigrants in Australia and in France were recognised as a group of people with a strong distinctive cultural identity, a group of people who had the capacity to adapt quickly to the ways of life in their respective host society and became successful citizens of the host country, but at the same time determined not to lose their group's core cultural values.

### ***Findings in Response to Research Question 3***

#### **Identity and Core Cultural Values**

This comparative study of Vietnamese language and cultural maintenance and transmission between the Vietnamese migrants in Paris and those in Adelaide, was conducted within the theoretical framework which had as its main postulate the notion that the preservation of cultures in their authentic form depends on the survival of the cultural value or values that are at their core. This theory was outlined in Chapter 3. The overwhelming evidence from this study was that the core elements of Vietnamese culture for the participants in this study consisted of the Vietnamese language and the Vietnamese family values. But it was also clear that for the Catholic participants, their Catholic beliefs formed an important part of their life in the host countries. In other words, the Catholic religion could be considered another core element of culture for these participants. These three elements of culture were closely connected, and they were regarded as defining characteristics of Vietnamese cultural identity for this particular group of Vietnamese immigrants both in Paris and in Adelaide. This focus of the research was outlined in research question 3.

*Based on the concept of core cultural values (Smolicz 1979; 1981), what did the participants consider as the core Vietnamese cultural values and how did these core values influence the formation of the participants' cultural identity, at individual and collective levels?*

#### **Vietnamese Language as a Core Cultural Value**

Evidence discussed in Chapters 6 & 7, indicates that there was a very close connection between language and personal cultural identity. When talking about their personal

cultural identity respondents had often mentioned their ability of speaking Vietnamese as marker of their identity. For the majority of the respondents (79-90% from Adelaide and 87% from Paris), language was considered the most important element of the Vietnamese culture. It was recognised as the main means of maintaining relationships and connections among Vietnamese people in the host countries and also with those in Vietnam. Language was seen by most participants as the main vehicle for transmitting the Vietnamese culture to second and future generations and consequently, the most important marker of their personal and group cultural identity.

The findings of Chapters (6, 7 & 8) showed a clear correlation between language and Vietnamese cultural identity for the participants in this study. These findings seemed to support the position that the Vietnamese language was one of the core values of the Vietnamese culture. It was a crucial component forming the Vietnamese cultural identity at both personal and collective level. According to Smolicz' (1979, 1981, 1999) theory of core values, the success of Vietnamese language maintenance was the crucial condition for the survival and development of the Vietnamese community in Australia, as well as other groups in Diaspora. Respondents from this study strongly believed that if the language were lost, Vietnamese group identity in countries such as Australia or France would be threatened and eventually disappear.

### **Vietnamese Family as a Core Cultural Value**

Evidence discussed in Chapter 8 regarding the Vietnamese family structures and values revealed a consensus among the participants that family values constituted another core element of Vietnamese culture. This finding confirmed Nguyễn Đình Hòa's and other researchers' claims on the importance of the Vietnamese family system (e.g., Nguyễn Xuân Thu, Trần Mỹ Vân, Mandy Thomas, Christian Jelen, Trần thị Niên and Ngô Quang Kiệt) (see Chapter 8). These authors all agreed that the Vietnamese family as a primary social system played a vital role in the success of the settlement of Vietnamese migrants in the host countries. Although Nguyễn Đình Hòa argued that the Vietnamese cultural norms were essentially based on Confucian principles, evidence from this research revealed that the Vietnamese family structure and lifestyle have been modified considerably with the influence of Western culture of the host societies (France and Australia). However, it remained a strong primary social system of relationships reflective of Confucian collective values. It served as the most important agent for language and culture maintenance and transmission. It could be argued that Vietnamese

culture is a family centred culture. The "Vietnameseness" of a person was seen by participants to be measured by his/her personal attitude and activation of the Vietnamese family values. A person deemed “mất gốc” was a person who did not value or live according to the family’s moral code of conduct.

Given the strong influence of Confucianism in the past, Vietnamese immigrants of first generation, regardless of their religious beliefs, whether they are Christians or Buddhists, would have no hesitation to accept Confucian precepts “Nhân, Lễ, Nghĩa, Trí, Tín” as guiding principles of their life or their personal ideological values. The second generation participants in Adelaide revealed some indirect influence of this ideological system from their parents but most considered some of Confucian teachings on social order and role and relationships within the Vietnamese family system as discussed in Chapter 8 unacceptable. It is the view of the researcher that the tapestry of the Vietnamese culture created by second and future generations of Vietnamese in Western countries such as Australia and France will reveal much less influence of Confucian values than their parents’ generation.

### **Religion as a Core Cultural Value**

Vietnamese culture has been influenced by three great religions called “Tam Giáo” namely Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism in the past, and from 17<sup>th</sup> century, Christianity has played an important role in shaping the spiritual and cultural life of the Vietnamese people in Vietnam.

Vietnamese people are known to be open and tolerant of different religions but committed and faithful to the teachings of their religion. Religious plurality has been an accepted feature of modern Vietnamese society. People with different religions lived in harmony with one another. They were free to practise their religious beliefs without fear of persecution until the communist government took control of the North in 1954, then the whole country from 1975. In this respect, no one religious belief system could claim centrality in the Vietnamese culture, except perhaps for Confucianism, which is not a religion in a real sense, but more a philosophy of life with many moral and educational principles, guiding the Vietnamese consciousness for many centuries.

While exploring this question, the researcher is in a way wanting to claim that Vietnamese culture is a religion-centred culture, but across the whole group, the

commitment of individuals is not to just one religion, but to one of a number of religions. Evidence from this research revealed that for the Catholic participants in this study, especially those of first generation immigrants in France and in Australia, religion was a very important aspect of their lives. They rated the importance of religion as almost equal to language and family (80% for QAA group, 75% for QF group, and 54% for QAY group) (Chapter 8, page 315).

Being Catholic for these participants was one of the most important markers of who they were as a person in the Vietnamese community and in the host society. Unlike the majority of mainstream Australians for whom religion is a private matter, the Vietnamese Catholics were proud to publicly say that they are Catholic. They not only claimed their Catholic identity by word but more importantly they were committed to live their Catholic Faith through their daily prayers, their attendance of the Holy Mass and other religious services daily or at least weekly as a family (Nosedá, 2006). Their participation in religious groups and movements within their Catholic community was very high. Their close circles of friends would be from the Catholic groups within the Catholic community where they belonged. Both the Vietnamese Catholic community in South Australia and the Vietnamese Catholic community in Paris provided a good environment for their religious values to flourish and be transmitted to younger generations of Vietnamese-Australians in a culturally appropriate way. Since Vatican II, Catholic immigrants have been encouraged to keep their mother tongue and their culture. The diversity of language and culture of the immigrants has been more valued by the local church. Migrant chaplains and Pastoral workers have been appointed by the local bishop to provide pastoral care to members of their community in their own language and culture. Vietnamese Catholic immigrants in Adelaide, in particular, have benefited from this new approach.

According to Smolicz's theory of core values, it could be argued that for the majority of participants in this study, both in Paris and in Adelaide, the critical aspects of the Vietnamese culture from which they were able to build their personal cultural systems were language, family and their particular religion, Catholicism (Smolicz, 1979; 1981; 1999). These three cultural elements constituted the core cultural values for the particular groups of Vietnamese immigrants who participated in this study, but there is no claim, on the part of the researcher, that this would be true for the whole of the Vietnamese population in Australia or in France.

## Individual and Collective Identity

Evidence from this research (Chapters 6-9) show that almost all the participants in this study (both questionnaire respondents and memoir contributors) recognised the significance of Vietnamese language in their life, within their extended family and the Vietnamese community, especially the religious community where they belong. All the participants from both the first and second generation reported that they were very proud of their Vietnamese ethnic background. The question of how to be a Vietnamese, or what makes a person a distinctive Vietnamese, was also explored through questionnaire and memoir comments. The overall finding on this question showed two main lines of opinions. A high majority among those who knew how to speak Vietnamese thought that an "authentic" Vietnamese person must know how to speak Vietnamese. Certainly, anyone who did not speak the language would feel excluded from the extended family and the Vietnamese religious community, where Vietnamese language was being used as the main or the sole means of communication. In other words, Vietnamese language was recognised as a distinctive marker of the Vietnamese personal identity.

The other minority view, which was expressed through several memoirs, was that it was not necessary to know the Vietnamese language to be identified as *Vietnamese* in a society like Australia or France. A person born of Vietnamese parents in Australia is automatically classified as *Vietnamese* by ancestry even if he or she does not speak Vietnamese. So, a person can be called *Vietnamese* just by the privilege of his/her birth or his/her physical traits. Some memoir contributors pointed out that they did not want to be mistaken for a Chinese or a Japanese person because of their Asian physical look and they found it very offensive, and lacking in respect for their personal cultural identity. Several memoir respondents thought that if a person did not speak the language, but he/she knew how to behave appropriately according to Vietnamese cultural norms then he/she was qualified to be Vietnamese in identity. The question here is how such a person knows about the Vietnamese cultural norms or Vietnamese cultural values unless they make a deliberate decision to acquire them through learning. The response to this question is discussed further on, as one of the points to consider in the policy implication section of this research.

A person cannot choose to be born into a particular race or culture but can choose to be identified with or to reject his or her own culture and language. The process or experience of constructing personal cultural identity for individuals born of Vietnamese



parents in Australia was different from those born in France. However, the Vietnamese language was recognised by all the participants of this study as the most obvious marker of Vietnamese identity in Australia and in France. Hence the relationship between Vietnamese ethnicity and Vietnamese language was seen as very close.

It was found through this study, with all its limitations, that the Vietnamese language was clearly a key way in which Vietnamese culture was transmitted and manifested, and the study of factors influencing Vietnamese language use provided good insights into the ways Vietnamese cultural transmission occurs and hence, into processes of cultural change and adaptation of the participants of this study as individuals and as members of their extended family and the Vietnamese community.

It has been the main finding of this study that the Vietnamese cultural group is identifiable by the core values which its members individually and collectively uphold. From this, it follows that a threat to the core cultural values of a group is a threat to its continued existence. At group level these central, enduring values were rooted in collective historical experience, and passed forward by successive generations. Yet, as has been stressed, culture is never a fixed, unchanging entity. Thus, each generation is likely to re-interpret the values of the group, especially those that impinge directly on its own particular set of social, ideological, or even material circumstances. Evidence from this research as presented in Chapters (6, 7, 8 & 9) revealed that the cultural life of the participants in this study both in Adelaide and in Paris is still vigorous and vibrant.

The core cultural values of the group as discussed above consisted of mainly their linguistic and family values. Catholic religious values could also be considered for the Catholic participants as a core cultural value. These core values are well maintained thanks to a strong network of primary and secondary social systems created by the family system and the Vietnamese ethnic organisations, especially the Vietnamese religious communities. These core cultural values are further strengthened and protected by the group's strong in-group marriage patterns and their close connections with their country of origin, Vietnam (refer to Chapters 6, 7 & 8). Vietnamese communities, especially Catholic communities in both countries, proved to be vital contributors to the formation of the collective cultural identity of the Vietnamese in both countries. Evidence showed that there was more harmonious group identity in Australia compared with that in France.

Smolicz (1979) argued that collectively group identity is the result of the sharing of core values by individual members. It is the link between core values and the social systems of the group. Evidence from this research revealed a strong link between core cultural values and the social systems of the respondents, between individual members' personal ideological systems and the group's ideological system or cultural identity.

### ***Findings in Response to Question 4***

The fourth research question outlined in Chapter 1 related to the way the Vietnamese immigrants were affected by government social and educational policies. The question was worded as follows :

*To what extent did the social and educational policies adopted by the French and Australian governments in dealing with Vietnamese immigrants differ? How far did these differences influence the patterns of Vietnamese language and culture maintenance in the two Catholic communities investigated?*

In a plural society such as Australia, Clyne (1979) and Smolicz (1979) claimed that it was important to have a successful multicultural model of adaptation which focussed on cultural interaction across ethnic groups and fostered a pattern of bilingual bicultural adaptation among members of the various ethnic groups. For this to be achieved, the dominant cultural group (Anglo-Celtic) in Australia had to recognise the legitimate right of each ethnic group to keep its language and culture and to transmit this cultural heritage to their children and future generations. In this way they would be able to contribute to the overall cultural and linguistic tapestry of the whole society. This multicultural model was accepted and implemented by successive Australian governments in the mid 1970s to the mid 1990s. Educationally speaking, in this multicultural model, the government and educational authorities of the country had the responsibility to provide educational opportunities for children of every ethnic group to learn their language and culture during their schooling years and beyond, as well as increasing the opportunity for children of the dominant group to learn another language

France, on the other hand, upheld very strongly an assimilationist model of cultural adaptation. Immigrants arriving in France have been expected to assimilate as quickly as possible in the public sphere. This involved speaking only French in work situations and in French society at large, as well as dressing and interacting with people in the community in the French manner (Smolicz 1999: 28) Immigrants were not absolutely

denied the right to maintain a language and culture other than French, but this could only be done in the privacy of their homes. They could expect no support or encouragement from the French government at any level for any community development or cultural activity of their particular ethnic group. At the educational level, there were no opportunities for Vietnamese immigrant children to study their home language anywhere in the school system (Dickson & Cummins, 1996).

### **Vietnamese Language Education**

The findings of Chapter 5 indicated clearly that Vietnamese language education in terms of its policies, programs and opportunities in Australia was greatly different compared with the situation in France. At the time of this research Vietnamese language programs throughout three education levels from primary to tertiary were readily available in Australia, not only for Vietnamese students but also for any students who wished to learn Vietnamese. These programs were taught by qualified or retrained teachers using good curriculum materials and appropriate textbooks produced in Australia. These programs were funded by the Australian governments either through mainstream programs or ethnic school programs. Consequently, many thousands of Vietnamese students took the opportunity to study Vietnamese up to year 12 and many continued their Vietnamese studies at universities around Australia during the period 1980-2000 (see Chapter 5 for further details). This was one of best educational outcomes for the Vietnamese immigrants living in Australia with regard to language maintenance and transmission to the younger generation of Vietnamese born in Australia or in Vietnam.

Evidence from Chapter 5 also revealed that, although the position of Vietnamese language in the official Australian language policies at National level and State levels was relatively limited compared with other so-called trade languages such as Chinese and Japanese, Vietnamese was recognised as an important community language. As such, it was quite well supported with funding from the federal government as well as a number of states in Australia during the 1980s and 1990s up to 2000. In France there was no such funding available for the teaching of Vietnamese as a community language. The Vietnamese language was not mentioned in any of the French language policies at primary and secondary levels of education at the time of this research. Many of the children of the participants in QF group in Paris did not study Vietnamese at all during their primary and secondary school years. Only one oral memoir contributor No 11 reported that her two daughters (university students at the time of interview) had

completed a Vietnamese program through a private tutor up to year 12 equivalent. Children of other participants in the QF group participated in the Vietnamese classes conducted at the Vietnamese Catholic community in Paris. These classes were taught by leaders of the Eucharistic Children's Movement, not by professionally trained teachers as in the case of Vietnamese classes in Australia. In contrast to the French situation, a large majority (86%) of the participants in the QAY group from Adelaide reported that they were studying Vietnamese at the time of the questionnaire completion.

The findings of Chapter 5 also revealed that Vietnamese community efforts towards the maintenance of Vietnamese language and culture were equally strong in both countries. Community effort and commitment were clearly demonstrated through the organisation of and support for numerous Vietnamese ethnic schools and Vietnamese language classes in both countries. However, the Vietnamese ethnic schools in Australia in general and in South Australia in particular, were much better organised and better resourced compared to those in Paris, since the ethnic school system was funded by Australian governments. It was recognised as a complementary provider of language education in Australia, while in France the ethnic school system was neither funded nor recognised by the French educational authorities. Vietnamese language classes in France totally depended on the voluntary service of the relevant community or religious groups. Therefore, in terms of funding and availability of Vietnamese programs, the Australian situation was much better supported by the Australian Government than by the French Government.

Evidence from Chapter 5 also showed that France had a long tradition of teaching Vietnamese language, literature and culture at universities as a foreign language. At the time of this research (2005), there was one university in Paris which offered a range of Vietnamese courses from undergraduate level to post-graduate level, including a PhD research degree in Vietnamese Studies. Australia only started to introduce Vietnamese Studies at tertiary level in the 1980s. At the time of this research (2005), there were two Australian universities offering Vietnamese to a small number of undergraduate students and the future of these courses was very uncertain. Opportunities for postgraduate students to undertake Vietnamese Studies at PhD level hardly existed in Australia at the time. Thus, the development of Vietnamese Studies as a university discipline at tertiary level was limited in both countries at the time of this research, but was better established in France.

Overall, in terms of educational policies and practices, a child born in Australia had a better chance to learn and develop their Vietnamese language and culture skills and knowledge than a child born of Vietnamese parents living in France. The findings of Chapter 5 also revealed that people's attitudes in the wider community towards the Vietnamese language and culture were more receptive in Australia than in France. This must be seen as a positive outcome of the Australian Multicultural Policy which was well supported by both major political parties in Australia in the 1980s and 1990s, whereas France has never supported such a policy.

## ***Implications of Research***

### **Policy Implementation**

The findings of this study have important policy implications for the Vietnamese community members, educational authorities and government agencies. Below are some suggestions for implementation.

1) Evidence from this study confirmed that Vietnamese ethnic schools have been and continue to be vibrant in Australia. So far these schools have played the vital role in the maintenance of Vietnamese language and culture. The Vietnamese community and the government should continue to support ethnic schools as a complementary provider of Vietnamese language education but not as the sole provider. The Vietnamese language should be taught in a greater number of mainstream Australian schools and universities as a second language program, open to both Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese background students for the benefit of Australia as a multicultural society. Vietnamese community leaders in France should lobby the French government to do the same in France.

2) Vietnam has become a popular tourist destination for Westerners in general, and Australians in particular, because of its natural beauty, the hospitality of its people, and its proximity to Australia. The Australian government and the French government should invest in Vietnam in this area more. Why not consider a free trade agreement with Vietnam? Vietnam could become a great market for Australian exports. However, Australia should only do this on the condition that Vietnam improves its human right record, and respects religious freedom for all religions in Vietnam.

3) The most urgent need for Vietnamese teaching in South Australia is to secure a supply of teachers of Vietnamese for Australian schools, including ethnic schools. Many of the teachers of Vietnamese reported in Chapter 5 have now retired or will soon be retired. This need will become more critical as second generation young Vietnamese become parents and want their children to learn Vietnamese.

### **Further Research**

It would be desirable to conduct two further research studies as follow up of the present study: one in France and one in Australia. The one in France should cover a larger set of data and should be conducted by a researcher in France. Data should be drawn from the Buddhist, as well as the Catholic community in France. The one in Australia should be conducted by a researcher in Australia. Data should come from both the Buddhist and Catholic communities in South Australia.

The scope and research topic should be similar to the present research. The overall aim would be to examine the differences and similarities between the two religious communities regarding their cultural adaptation experiences, focusing on Vietnamese language and culture maintenance. Participants should include those from the second and third generations in order to investigate further the changes and patterns of cultural adaptations taking place in the Vietnamese community, at the generational level in each country.

### ***Overall Concluding Remarks***

Based on the findings presented in this study it is appropriate to conclude that the cultural adaptation process of the participants both in Paris and in Adelaide was a successful process. It helped to achieve a very high level of language and culture maintenance for the first generation Vietnamese immigrants in both communities. For the second generation however, this study show that the process was much more successful in Adelaide than in Paris. There were two main factors contributing to this Australian success: Firstly, the absolute commitment of the Vietnamese parents, who not only believed in the importance of the Vietnamese language, but also used practical strategies to encourage and to support their children to study Vietnamese from reception to year 12.

Observation data showed that many Vietnamese parents have done so for five or six of their children over a period of 15-20 years of their lives faithfully each weekend, until the last child finished year 12 Vietnamese through an ethnic school. Secondly, it is attributed to the fact that children from Australia had a better opportunity to learn Vietnamese than those in France because Vietnamese language programs were more readily available in Australia. The Vietnamese language was given a more prominent status in the Australian education system and much better funded compared with the French situation. These initiatives happened as a consequence of the Australian multicultural policy which had strong support from both major political parties in the eighties and nineties. The Vietnamese refugees, the boat people, were lucky to have arrived in Australia at the right time, when the White Australian policy favouring assimilation, was replaced by multiculturalism as a model for cultural adaptation of immigrants in a plural society from the mid-1970s.

With regard to core cultural values, this study identified Vietnamese language, family and religion (Catholicism) for the Vietnamese Catholics as their core cultural values. It could be argued that Vietnamese culture was a language-centred culture because Vietnamese language was recognised as the most crucial core cultural value of the Vietnamese culture, and the strength of Vietnamese linguistic maintenance and transmission had in fact enabled the Vietnamese Catholic communities in Australia and to a lesser degree in France, to establish for themselves a very distinctive group identity among other ethnic groups in Australia and in France.

However, not everyone agreed that language was the sole element which defined the Vietnamese culture or made a person *Vietnamese*. Some argued that a person of Vietnamese ancestry, who did not speak Vietnamese, could still be hundred per cent Vietnamese if that person knew how to keep “Tinh Thần Việt Nam or the Vietnamese spirit” alive in their lives as discussed previously in Chapter 6. It was difficult to define exactly what constituted “Tinh Thần Việt Nam”. For some participants in this study, it was equivalent to nationalism or patriotism, similar to what Nguyễn Đình Hòa called “nation-ism” or “Tinh Dân Tộc”. This characteristic was considered by Nguyễn Đình Hòa and other Vietnamese writers as one of the main features of the Vietnamese people, and it is deeply embedded in the Vietnamese culture. History would suggest that thanks

to the collective strength of this cultural value, the Vietnamese people have many times been successful in their struggles for independence against the most powerful colonial authorities, namely the Chinese (3 B.C - 939), the French (1858-1954) and the Americans in the 1970s. Now living overseas, the Vietnamese immigrants, as individuals and as community members, have continued to live by this ideology through their financial and political support for those who are victims of poverty and political oppression in Vietnam. Thus, “nation-ism” in humanistic sociological terms, could be defined as one of the most important ideological values of the Vietnamese.

This is the very reason why during the Chinese domination and the French colonial period, the colonial powers tried to destroy the unity among the people of Vietnam, to undermine the importance of the Vietnamese language by imposing their own language on the people of Vietnam and dividing the country and its people into three separate regions (North, Centre and South). History proved that neither the French nor the Chinese were successful because Vietnamese people were very resilient. They refused to be linguistically assimilated. Instead of losing their Vietnamese language, they found ways of integrating linguistic elements from Chinese and French into the Vietnamese language and yet kept it uniquely Vietnamese. Perhaps this sort of spirit has been at work in the Australian context, and helps to explain their high level of language maintenance, compared to many other minority ethnic groups in Australia (Clyne 2001, 2005).

Overall, the findings presented in this thesis enable the researcher to conclude that the cultural adaptation process of Vietnamese immigrants in Australia is in fact a success story, a testimony that the multicultural policy adopted by Australia has worked to the benefit of Vietnamese immigrants, who participated in this investigation, to a greater degree than those in France. Despite its limitations, this policy had helped the Vietnamese-Australians to maintain their language and culture and to journey towards the bilingual, bicultural type of Vietnamese-Australians and at the same time to become successful citizens of Australia, a great multicultural nation in the world.



## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Questionnaire 1 for Respondents in Australia (QAA group)

#### VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS IN AUSTRALIA

#### DI DÂN VIỆT NAM TẠI ÚC

Note: You may choose to answer the question either in English or in Vietnamese.

Please place a tick in the appropriate box(X) where necessary.

*Xin đánh dấu (X) vào những ô thích hợp khi trả lời.*

**Researcher's use only: Phần dành riêng cho người nghiên cứu.**

Questionnaire No. ....

Series .....

Date .....

Language .....

#### SECTION 1: PERSONAL DETAILS

#### PHẦN 1: CHI TIẾT CÁ NHÂN

1.1 Date of Birth ...../...../.....

*Ngày sinh* ...../...../.....

1.2 Place of Birth .....

*Nơi sinh* .....

1.3 Sex Male Female  
*Phái tính Nam [ ] Nữ [ ]*

1.4 Marital Status: Married Single  
*Tình trạng hôn nhân Có gia đình Độc thân*  
[ ] [ ]

1.5 Present Address .....  
*Địa chỉ hiện tại* ..... Tel:.....

- 1.6 Children: Ages Sex Place of Birth  
*Con cái: Tuổi Phái tính Nơi sinh*  
 .....
- 1.7 Citizenship Own Spouse Children's  
*Quốc tịch Bản thân Người phối ngẫu Con cái*  
 .....
- 1.8 Schools attended: .....  
*Trường theo học: .....*
- 1.9 Highest level of education reached: .....  
*Trình độ học vấn cao nhất: .....*
- 1.10 Schools attended by children: (if Applicable). .....  
*Trường con cái theo học: .....*
- 1.11 Highest level of education reached by children: .....  
*Trình độ học vấn cao nhất của các con: .....*
- 1.12 Occupation: In Vietnam In Australia  
*Nghề nghiệp Tại Việt Nam Tại Úc*  
 (i) Own .....  
*Bản thân*  
 (ii) Spouse .....  
*Người phối ngẫu*  
 (iii) Children who have left school  
*Con cái đã rời trường học*  
 .....  
 .....
- 1.13 Parents' and grandparents' place of birth:  
*Nơi sinh của cha mẹ và ông bà nội*  
 Father Mother Grandfather Grandmother  
*Cha Mẹ Ông nội Bà nội*  
 .....  
 .....
- 1.14 Parents' and grandparents' present address:  
*Địa chỉ hiện tại của cha mẹ và ông bà nội*  
 Parents (*Cha mẹ*)  
 .....  
 Grandparents (*Ông bà nội*)  
 .....

## 1.15 Parents' and grandparents' occupation/s

*Nghề nghiệp của cha mẹ và ông bà nội*

	Father	Mother	Grandfather	Grandmother
	<i>Cha</i>	<i>Mẹ</i>	<i>Ông nội</i>	<i>Bà nội</i>
In Vietnam	.....	.....	.....	.....
<i>Tại Việt Nam</i>				
In Australia	.....	.....	.....	.....
<i>Tại Úc</i>				

**SECTION 2: YOUR DECISION TO EMIGRATE*****PHẦN 2: QUYẾT ĐỊNH DI DÂN***2.1 Date of Arrival in Australia: *Ngày tới Úc*

Date (Ngày)	Month (Tháng)	Year (Năm)
.....	.....	.....

2.2 Reasons to arrive in Australia: *Lý do tới Úc*

- (i) *Refugee: Tỵ nạn* ( )
- (ii) *To re- unite with the family: Đoàn tụ gia đình* ( )
- (iii) *Students: Sinh viên* ( )
- (iv) *Other reasons please specify* ( )
- Những lý do khác (Xin nói rõ)*
- .....

## 2.3 Are you now pleased that you came to Australia?

*Bây giờ bạn có hài lòng là đã đến Úc không?*Yes (*Có*) [ ] No (*Không*) [ ]

## 2.4 What in your opinion are the three main advantages for living in Australia?

*Theo ý kiến bạn thì ba điều lợi chính khi sống tại Úc là gì?*

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

and disadvantages? (và ba điểm bất lợi là gì?)

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

2.5 Would you advise young people in Vietnam to emigrate here?

*Quý vị có muốn khuyên giới trẻ ở Việt Nam di dân tới Úc không?*

Yes (Có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]

If your answered 'no' please explain briefly:

*Nếu quý vị trả lời (Không) thì xin giải thích ngắn gọn không:*

.....  
 .....

2.6 Do you think your children have benefitted from living in Australia?

*Quý vị có nghĩ rằng con cái quý vị được lợi khi sống tại Úc không?*

Yes (Có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]

If 'yes', in what way?

*Nếu có thì trong phương diện nào?*

.....  
 .....

2.7 Do you feel welcome here in Australia ?

*Quý vị có cảm thấy được tiếp đón nồng hậu tại Úc không?*

Yes (Có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]

2.8 Have you ever considered returning to Vietnam to live?

*Có bao giờ quý vị nghĩ đến việc trở về Việt nam sống không?*

Yes (Có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]

Why? (Tại sao?). ....  
 .....  
 .....

### SECTION 3: YOUR LINGUISTIC EXPERIENCE

#### PHẦN 3: KINH NGHIỆM NGÔN NGỮ CỦA QUÝ VỊ

- 3.1 How do you grade your Vietnamese and English language skills in *a) understand, b) speak, c) read and d) write* at present?  
(Show your proficiency level by placing a tick (X) in the appropriate space.)

*Quý vị lượng giá khả năng tiếng Việt và tiếng Anh của mình thế nào trong các kỹ năng a) Hiểu, b) Nói, c) Đọc và d) Viết hiện nay?*

*(Xin cho biết trình độ thành thạo của bạn bằng cách đánh dấu (X) vào những ô thích hợp)*

		Understand Hiểu		Speak Nói		Read Đọc		Write Viết	
		VN	Eng	VN	Eng	VN	Eng	VN	Eng
At present  Hiện nay	Very well Rất giỏi								
	Well Giỏi								
	A little Chút ít								
	Not at all Không chút nào								

Note: VN = Vietnamese (tiếng Việt); Eng = English (tiếng Anh)

- 3.2 If your overall proficiency in Vietnamese has substantially diminished or increased, please indicate in order of priority (1,2,3,4,5) what you consider to be the reasons for this:

*Nếu sự thông thạo về Tiếng Việt của bạn đã tăng hay giảm thì xin ghi theo thứ tự ưu tiên (1,2,3,4,5) mà bạn nghĩ đó là những lý do tạo nên sự kiện này:*

***My Vietnamese Proficiency has******DECREASED because******Sự thông thạo của Tiếng Việt của tôi bị giảm******sút vì:****(Xin trả lời bằng số 1,2,3,4,5 theo thứ tự ưu tiên.**Số 1 là quan trọng nhất và 5 là ít quan trọng nhất)****My Vietnamese Proficiency has******INCREASED because******Sự thông thạo Tiếng Việt của tôi gia tăng vì:****(Please indicate in order of priority (1,2,3,4,5.**Number 1 is the most important and 5 is the least important)*

Lack of parental support

*Thiếu sự hỗ trợ của cha mẹ*

[ ]

Parental support

*Nhờ sự hỗ trợ của cha mẹ*

[ ]

Lack of practice

*(eg. outside the home)**Thiếu thực hành (ngoài gia đình)*

[ ]

Opportunity to practice

*(eg. outside the home)**Có cơ hội thực hành (ngoài gia đình)*

[ ]

Language not being taught at school

*Ngôn ngữ không được dạy ở trường*

[ ]

Formal instruction at school

*Được dạy chính thức ở trường*

[ ]

Change of residence

*Thay đổi chỗ ở*

[ ]

Change of residence

*Thay đổi chỗ ở*

[ ]

Other (please specify)

[ ]

Other (please specify)

[ ]

*Yếu tố khác (xin nói rõ)**Yếu tố khác (xin nói rõ)*

.....

.....

Any other comments *(Bất cứ ý kiến nào khác quý vị muốn đóng góp về điểm này)*

.....

## 3.3 What language would you use when speaking to each of the following?

*Quý vị dùng ngôn ngữ nào khi nói chuyện với những người sau đây?*

Always in

Mainly in

*Luôn dùng tiếng**thường dùng tiếng*Husband/wife: *Chồng/Vợ*

.....

.....

Children : *Con cái*

.....

.....

Brother/s Sister/s: *Anh chị em*

.....

.....

Mother: *Mẹ*

.....

.....

Father : *Cha*

.....

.....

Grandparents : *Ông bà*

.....

.....

Other relatives : *Bà con họ hàng*

.....

.....

Vietnamese-speaking friends:

.....

.....

*(Bạn bè Việt nam)*

3.4 What language/s do you use when you write or ring your relatives and friends in Vietnam?.....

Quý vị dùng tiếng gì khi viết thư hay điện thoại cho bà con họ hàng hay bạn bè ở Việt Nam?

3.5 (i) Do you encourage your children to speak Vietnamese?

Quý vị có khuyến khích con cái nói tiếng Việt không?

Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ] N/A [ ]

(ii) According to you, how much your efforts have been successful?

Theo quý vị thì sự cố gắng của quý vị trong việc khuyến khích con cái học tiếng Việt đã kết quả tới mức độ nào?

Very successful Little successful Not successful

Rất thành công Ít thành công Không thành công  
[ ] [ ] [ ]

3.6 Do you want to maintain your Vietnamese language?

Quý vị có muốn giữ tiếng Việt của mình không?

Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]

3.7 In your opinion, is it important for a Vietnamese person to be able to speak Vietnamese?

Theo quý vị thì một người Việt biết nói tiếng Việt có quan trọng không?

Very important Relatively important Not important

Rất quan trọng Hơi quan trọng Không quan trọng  
[ ] [ ] [ ]

3.8 In your opinion, is it important for your children to communicate with others well in Vietnamese?

Theo quý vị thì việc con cái có thể giao tế hữu hiệu bằng tiếng Việt có quan trọng không?

Very important Relatively important Not important

Rất quan trọng Hơi quan trọng Không quan trọng  
[ ] [ ] [ ]

3.9 Do you think that the Education Department in Australia has the responsibility to offer Vietnamese in schools so that your children and those who wish to learn Vietnamese have the opportunity to do so?

Quý vị có nghĩ rằng bộ giáo dục tại Úc có bổn phận mở chương trình tiếng Việt tại các trường cho con cái của quý vị hay bất cứ ai muốn học tiếng Việt không?

Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]

3.10 If you answer "No" in the question above then who do you think have the responsibility to teach Vietnamese to your children?

Nếu quý vị trả lời "Không" cho câu hỏi trên thì quý vị nghĩ ai là người có phận vụ dạy tiếng Việt cho con em của quý vị?

<i>Parents</i>	<i>Vietnamese Religious Community</i>	<i>Vietnamese Community</i>
<i>Cha mẹ</i>	<i>Cộng Đoàn tôn giáo VN</i>	<i>Cộng Đồng Người Việt</i>
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

3.11 In your opinion is it important that your children learn Vietnamese?

Đối với quý vị thì việc con cái học tiếng Việt có phải là điều quan trọng không?

<i>Very important</i>	<i>Relatively important</i>	<i>Not important</i>
<i>Rất quan trọng</i>	<i>Hơi quan trọng</i>	<i>Không quan trọng</i>
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

## SECTION 4: YOUR SOCIAL AND FAMILY LIFE

### PHẦN 4: ĐỜI SỐNG GIA ĐÌNH VÀ XÃ HỘI

- 4.1 (i) Do you belong to any social group or organisation?  
 Quý vị có sinh hoạt trong một nhóm hay một tổ chức xã hội nào không?  
*Yes (có)* [ ] *No (Không)* [ ]

If "Yes" give the name of the organisation.

Nếu "Có" xin cho tên của tổ chức đó

.....

- (ii) What are the common aims of the organisation?

Mục đích sinh hoạt chung của tổ chức đó là gì?

.....

.....

- 4.2 (i) Do you belong to any Vietnamese Religious Community or group in Australia?

Quý vị có thuộc về Cộng Đoàn hay tổ chức Tôn Giáo Việt Nam nào tại Úc không?

*Yes (có)* [ ] *No (Không)* [ ]

- (ii) If "Yes" give the name of that Religious Community or group

Nếu "Có" xin cho tên của Cộng Đoàn hay tổ chức tôn giáo đó.

.....

- (iii) In your opinion, is it important for you to belong to that Religious Community in Aust?

Theo quý vị thì thuộc về một Cộng Đoàn hay tổ chức tôn Giáo Việt Nam tại Úc có quan trọng không?

<i>Very important</i>	<i>Relatively important</i>	<i>Not important</i>
<i>Rất quan trọng</i>	<i>Hơi quan trọng</i>	<i>Không quan trọng</i>
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Give two reasons for your response (*Xin nêu hai lý do*)

.....

.....



- (iv) Do the activities of the Vietnamese Religious Community or group, to which you belong, have helped you to maintain the Vietnamese Language?

Quý vị có nghĩ rằng những sinh hoạt của Cộng đoàn hay tổ chức tôn Giáo Việt Nam, nơi bạn đang sinh hoạt, đã giúp mình giữ được Tiếng Việt không?

Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]

Give two reasons for your response (Xin nêu hai lý do)

.....  
 .....

- (v) Do you think that the activities of your Vietnamese Religious Community have helped your children to maintain the Vietnamese Language?

Quý vị có nghĩ rằng những sinh hoạt của Cộng đoàn Tôn Giáo Việt Nam, nơi bạn đang sinh hoạt, đã giúp cho con em quý vị giữ được Tiếng Việt không?

Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]

Give two reasons for your response (Xin nêu hai lý do)

.....  
 .....

- (vi) Your children, those who are at school, are they current studying Vietnamese? Những người con của quý vị, hiện còn đang đi học, có học tiếng Việt không?

Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]

If "Yes" give the name of that Vietnamese Language School

Nếu "Có" xin cho tên của trường Việt ngữ đó

.....

#### 4.3 Do you think that your social life in Australia is:

Quý vị có nghĩ rằng đời sống xã hội của quý vị tại Úc thì:

- (i) As good as in Vietnam (*tốt bằng ở Việt Nam*) [ ]  
 (ii) Better (*tốt hơn*) [ ]  
 (iii) Not as good (*không tốt bằng*) [ ]

#### 4.4 Do you have parents or relatives in Australia?

Quý vị có cha mẹ hay họ hàng bà con tại Úc không?

Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]

#### 4.5 Do you often see your relatives in Australia?

Quý vị có thường gặp bà con họ hàng tại Úc không?

<i>Very often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
<i>Rất thường xuyên</i>	<i>Đôi khi</i>	<i>Không bao giờ</i>
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

- 4.6 When you need help to whom do you turn to first?  
 Khi quý vị cần sự giúp đỡ thì quý vị chạy đến ai trước tiên?

*Family Friends Social organisation*

*Gia đình Bạn bè Cơ quan xã hội*

[ ] [ ] [ ]

- 4.7 Please give the following information concerning three of your close friends:  
 Xin quý vị vui lòng cho các chi tiết sau đây về ba người bạn thân của quý vị:

Ethnic origin (i).....

*Nguồn gốc sắc tộc* (ii).....

(iii).....

Mother tongue (i).....

*Tiếng mẹ đẻ* (ii).....

(iii).....

Occupation (i).....

*Nghề nghiệp* (ii).....

(iii).....

## SECTION 5: IDENTITY AND ADAPTATION

### *Phần 5: BẢN SẮC VÀ SỰ HỘI NHẬP*

- 5.1 I like to identify myself as (*Tôi thích coi mình là* )

Australian (*Người Úc*) [ ]

Vietnamese (*Người Việt*) [ ]

Vietnamese Australian (*Người Úc gốc Việt*) [ ]

- 5.2 Are you proud of your Vietnamese background?

Quý vị có cảm thấy hãnh diện về nguồn gốc Việt nam của mình không?

*Yes (có)* [ ] *No (Không)* [ ]

- 5.3 Do you feel that you have fully integrated into the Australian society?

Quý vị có cảm thấy là mình đã hoàn toàn hội nhập vào xã hội Úc không?

*Fully Partly Not at all*

*Hoàn toàn Một phần nào Hoàn toàn không*

[ ] [ ] [ ]

- 5.4 How do you evaluate the importance of the following aspects of Vietnamese culture?

*Quý vị đánh giá tầm quan trọng của các khía cạnh văn hóa Việt Nam sau đây thế nào?*

Aspects of culture	Very important Rất quan trọng	Relatively important Hơi quan trọng	Not important Không quan trọng
(i) Viet Language ( <i>Tiếng Việt</i> )			
(ii) Family ( <i>Gia đình</i> )			
(iii) Religion ( <i>Tôn giáo</i> )			
(iv) Dance and music ( <i>Ca, vũ, nhạc</i> )			
(v) Literature ( <i>Văn chương</i> )			
(vi) History & Geography ( <i>Sử ký &amp; Địa lý</i> )			
(vii) Respect for the elderly ( <i>Kính người lớn tuổi</i> )			
(viii) Vietnamese food ( <i>Đồ ăn Việt nam</i> )			

5.5 Do you often do the following activities:

- (i) Listen to Vietnamese songs ?  
*Quý vị có thường nghe các bài hát Việt nam không?*  
*Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]*
- (ii) Watch Vietnamese videos ?  
*Quý vị có thường xem videos tiếng Việt nam không?*  
*Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]*
- (iii) Listen to the Vietnamese programs on SBS radio or watch SBS TV?  
*Nghe hay xem các chương trình truyền thanh truyền hình tiếng Việt trên đài SBS không? Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]*
- (iv) Read Vietnamese newspapers and magazines?  
*Quý vị có thường đọc báo tiếng Việt không?*  
*Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]*
- (v) Read Vietnamese books?  
*Quý vị có thường đọc sách tiếng Việt không?*  
*Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]*
- (vi) Eat Vietnamese food?  
*Quý vị có thường ăn đồ ăn Việt Nam không?*  
*Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]*

5.6 What are the aspects of Vietnamese life that you would like to see disappear in Australia? *Những khía cạnh nào trong nếp sống của người Việt mà bạn muốn bỏ đi khi sống tại Úc?*

.....  
 .....

5.7 What are the Vietnamese customs and traditions which your family still keep in Australia? *Những phong tục tập quán Việt nam nào mà gia đình bạn còn đang giữ khi sống tại Úc?*

.....  
 .....

5.8 Do you teach these customs and traditions to your children?

*Quý vị có dạy các phong tục tập quán đó cho con cái của quý vị không?*

*Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]*

*Why? (Tại sao?)*

.....  
 .....

5.9 Do you think the Australian Government should have treated Vietnamese migrants better? *Quý vị có nghĩ rằng lẽ ra chính phủ Úc phải đối xử với người di dân Việt nam một cách tốt đẹp hơn không?*

*Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]*

*Please give your comments (Xin cho ý kiến)*

.....  
 .....

Thank you for taking your time to fill in this questionnaire. Your help is most appreciated, and your information will be kept confidential and only used for the purpose of this research.

Xin chân thành cảm ơn quý vị đã dành thời giờ quý báu của quý vị trả lời bản thăm dò ý kiến này. Tất cả những dữ kiện quý vị cung cấp trong bản thăm dò ý kiến này sẽ được giữ mật và chỉ dùng trong dự án nghiên cứu này thôi.

## Appendix 2: Questionnaire 2 for Respondents in France (QF group)

### VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS IN FRANCE *DI DÂN VIỆT NAM TẠI PHÁP*

**Note: Répondez aux questions suivantes en Français ou en Vietnamien.**

Mettre une croix dans la case appropriée quand il est nécessaire.

*Xin đánh dấu vào những ô thích hợp sau đây khi cần thiết.*

Researcher's use only (*Phần dành cho người nghiên cứu*)

Questionnaire No. ....

Series .....

Date .....

Language .....

#### SECTION 1: DETAILS PERSONELS

##### *Phần 1: CHI TIẾT CÁ NHÂN*

1.1 Date de naissance ...../...../.....

*Ngày sinh* ...../...../.....

1.2 Lieu de naissance .....

*Nơi sinh* .....

1.3 Sexe Masculin Feminin

*Phái tính Nam Nữ*  
[ ] [ ]

1.4 Etat de mariage: Marié Célibataire

*Tình trạng hôn nhân Có gia đình độc thân*

.....

1.5 Adresse actuelle .....

*Địa chỉ hiện tại* ..... Tel: .....

1.6 Enfants: Âge Sexe Lieu de naissance

*Con cái: Tuổi Phái tính Nơi sinh*

.....

.....

1.7 Nationalité de Soi-même Epouse Enfants

*Quốc tịch Bản thân Người phối ngẫu Con cái*

.....

- 1.8 Le plus haut niveau d'éducation: .....  
*Trình độ học vấn cao nhất:* .....
- 1.9 Ecoles où les enfants étudient: .....  
*Trường con cái theo học:* .....
- 1.10 Le plus haut niveau d'études des enfants: .....  
*Trình độ học vấn cao nhất của con cái:* .....
- 1.11 Occupation: Au Vietnam En France  
*Nghề nghiệp Ở Việt Nam Ở Pháp*
- (i) Soi-même .....  
*Bản thân*
- (ii) Votre époux/se .....  
*Người phối ngẫu*
- (iii) Enfants qui ont fini leurs études .....  
*Con cái đã học xong*
- 1.12 Lieu de naissance des parents: *Nơi sinh của cha mẹ*  
 Père (Cha) Mère (Mẹ)  
 .....  
 .....
- 1.13 Adresse actuelle des parents: *Địa chỉ hiện tại của cha mẹ*  
 .....  
 .....
- 1.14 Occupation des parents: *Nghề nghiệp của cha mẹ*
- Père (Cha) Mère (Mẹ)
- (i) Au Vietnam .....  
*Tại Việt Nam*
- (ii) En France .....  
*Tại Pháp*

## SECTION 2: VOTRE DECISION D'EMIGRER

### PHẦN 2: QUYẾT ĐỊNH DI DÂN

- 2.1 Date d'arrivée en France: *Ngày đến Pháp:*
- |                 |              |            |
|-----------------|--------------|------------|
| Date            | Mois         | Année      |
| <i>Ngày đến</i> | <i>Tháng</i> | <i>Năm</i> |
| .....           | .....        | .....      |

- 2.2 Raisons d'arrivée en France (*Lý do tới Pháp*)
- (i) Réfugié (*Tỵ nạn*) [ ]
- (ii) Pour se réunir avec votre famille (*Đoàn tụ gia đình*) [ ]
- (iii) Etudiant (*Sinh viên*) [ ]
- (iv) Autres raisons (indiquez s'il vous plait) [ ]  
*Những lý do khác (xin nói rõ)*  
 .....  
 .....
- 2.3 Maintenant êtes-vous content d'être arrivé en France ?  
*Bây giờ ông bà có hài lòng là đã đến Pháp không?*  
 Oui (*Có*) [ ] Non (*Không*) [ ]
- 2.4 Selon vous quels sont les trois avantages principaux de vivre en France?  
*Theo ý kiến quý vị ba điều lợi ích chính khi sống ở Pháp là gì?*
- (i) .....
- (ii) .....
- (iii) .....  
*Et trois désavantages (và ba điểm bất lợi)*
- (i) .....
- (ii) .....
- (iii) .....
- 2.5 Donneriez-vous aux jeunes du Vietnam le conseil d'émigrer en France?  
*Quý vị có muốn khuyên giới trẻ ở Việt Nam di dân tới Pháp không?*  
 Oui (*Có*) [ ] Non (*Không*) [ ]  
 Si vous répondez (Non) expliquez brièvement.  
*Nếu quý vị trả lời (không) xin giải thích ngắn gọn*  
 .....  
 .....
- 2.6 Pensez-vous que vos enfants ont bénéficié de vivre en France?  
*Quý vị có nghĩ con cái quý vị được lợi khi sinh sống ở Pháp không?*  
 Oui (*Có*) [ ] Non (*Không*) [ ]  
 Si (Oui) de quelle façon?  
*Nếu 'có' trong phương diện nào?*  
 .....  
 .....
- 2.7 Pensez-vous que vous êtes bien accueilli en France?  
*Quý vị có cảm thấy được đón tiếp nồng hậu tại Pháp không?*  
 Oui (*Có*) [ ] Non (*Không*) [ ]
- 2.8 Avez-vous jamais pensé à retourner au Vietnam?  
*Có bao giờ quý vị nghĩ đến việc trở về Việt Nam sống không?*  
 Oui (*Có*) [ ] Non (*Không*) [ ]  
 Pourquoi? (*Tại sao?*) .....

### SECTION 3: VOTRE EXPERIENCE LINGUISTIQUE

#### PHẦN 3: KINH NGHIỆM NGÔN NGỮ CỦA QUÝ VỊ

3.1 Quelle/s langue/s pouviez-vous: **a) comprendre, b) parler, c) lire et d) écrire**  
(Indiquez votre compétence de cette langue dans la case appropriée par une croix (X)).

*Ngôn ngữ nào quý vị: a) hiểu, b) nói, c) đọc và d) viết*

*(Xin cho biết trình độ thành thạo của quý vị bằng cách đánh dấu (X) vào những khoảng trống thích hợp)*

		Comprendre <i>Hiểu</i>			Parler <i>Nói</i>			Lire <i>Đọc</i>			Ecrire <i>Viết</i>		
		VN a	Fr b	Aut c	VN a	Fr b	Aut c	VN a	Fr b	Au c	VN a	Fr b	Aut c
At present Hiện tại	Excellent												
	Rất giỏi												
	Bien												
	Giỏi												
	Un peu												
	Chút ít												
	Pasdu tout												
	Không chút nào												

Note: a = Vietnamien;

b = Français;

c = Autre

3.2 Si votre compétence de la langue indiquée ci-dessus a diminué ou augmenté, indiquez par l'ordre de priorité **(1,2,3,4,5)** ce que vous considérez étant les raisons de cela:

*Nếu sự thông thạo về bất cứ ngôn ngữ nào mà quý vị kể trên thực tế tăng hay giảm, xin ghi theo thứ tự ưu tiên (1,2,3,4,5) mà ông bà nghĩ đó là những lý do cho sự kiện này:*

Nom de la langue: .....

Nom de la langue:.....

Tên của Ngôn ngữ

Tên của Ngôn ngữ

(a) Compétence a diminué parce que:

(b) Compétence a augmenté parce que:

*Sự thông thạo về ngôn ngữ này giảm sút vì:*

*Sự thông thạo về ngôn ngữ này gia tăng nhờ:*

(c) Manque de support parental

(d) Support parental

*Thiếu sự hỗ trợ của cha mẹ* [ ]

*Cha mẹ hỗ trợ* [ ]



(e) Manque de pratiquer  
(ex. en dehors de la famille)

*Thiếu thực hành*  
(ví dụ, ngoài gia đình)

[ ]

(f) Occasion de pratiquer  
(ex. en dehors de la famille)

*Cơ hội thực hành*  
(ví dụ, ngoài gia đình)

[ ]

(g) Cette langue n'est pas enseignée  
à l'école ou à l'université

*Ngôn ngữ không được dạy ở trường*

[ ]

(h) Cette langue est enseignée à l'école ou  
à l'université

*Được dạy chính thức ở trường*

[ ]

(I) Cette langue n'est pas enseignée à la  
Mission Catholique Vietnamienne

*Tiếng này không dạy tại giáo xứ Việt Nam*

[ ]

(k) Cette langue est enseignée à la Mission  
Catholique Vietnamienne

*Tiếng này có dạy tại giáo xứ Việt Nam*

[ ]

Autre (indiquez s'il vous plait)

*Yếu tố khác (xin nói rõ)*

[ ]

Autre (indiquez s'il vous plait)

*Yếu tố khác (xin nói rõ)*

[ ]

Autres commentaires si vous le désirez (*Bất cứ chủ thích nào khác quý vị muốn góp ý kiến về điểm này*)

.....

3.3. Quelle langue utilisez-vous quand vous parlez aux personnes suivantes?

*Quý vị dùng ngôn ngữ nào khi nói chuyện với những người sau đây?*

	Toujours en <i>Luôn luôn</i>	Souvent en <i>Thường</i>
Epouse ( <i>Chồng/vợ</i> )	.....	.....
Enfants ( <i>Con cái</i> )	.....	.....
Frère/s et Soeur/s ( <i>Anh chị em</i> )	.....	.....
Mère ( <i>Mẹ</i> )	.....	.....
Père ( <i>Cha</i> )	.....	.....
Grandparents ( <i>Ông bà</i> )	.....	.....
Autre relations ( <i>Bà con khác</i> )	.....	.....
Amis qui parlent Vietnamien ( <i>Bạn bè nói tiếng Việt</i> )	.....	.....

3.4 Quelle langue utilisez-vous quand vous écrivez ou téléphonez à vos relations ou à vos ami/es au Vietnam?

*Quý vị dùng tiếng gì khi viết thư hay điện thoại cho bạn hay bà con tại*

*Việt Nam? .....*

3.5 (i) Avez-vous encouragé vos enfants à parler Vietnamien?

*Quý vị có khuyến khích con cái nói tiếng Việt không?*

Oui (Có) [ ] Non (Không) [ ] N/A [ ]

(ii) Selon vous dans quelle mesure vos efforts ont-il réussi

Theo quý vị thì sự cố gắng của quý vị trong việc khuyến khích con cái nói tiếng Việt đã đạt kết quả tới mức độ nào?

Beaucoup de succès	Peu de succès	Pas de succès du tout
Rất thành công	Ít thành công	Không thành công
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

3.6 Voulez-vous retenir votre langue, le Vietnamien?

*Quý vị có muốn giữ tiếng Việt của mình không?*

Oui (Có) [ ] Non (Không) [ ]

3.7 Selon vous est-il important pour un Vietnamien de pouvoir parler le Vietnamien?

*Theo quý vị thì một người Việt biết nói tiếng Việt có quan trọng không?*

Très important	Relativement important	Pas important du tout
Rất quan trọng	Hơi quan trọng	Không quan trọng
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

3.8 Est-il important pour vous que vos enfants puissent bien communiquer en Vietnamien?  
*Đối với quý vị thì việc con cái có thể giao tế hữu hiệu bằng tiếng Việt có phải là điều quan trọng không?*

Très important	Relativement important	Pas important du tout
Rất quan trọng	Hơi quan trọng	Không quan trọng
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

3.9 Selon vous le Ministère de l'Education en France a-t-il la responsabilité d'enseigner le Vietnamien à l'école pour vos enfants et d'autres qui voudraient l'apprendre?

*Theo quý vị thì bộ giáo dục tại Pháp có bổn phận mở chương trình tiếng Việt tại trường cho con con em của quý vị hay bất cứ ai muốn học tiếng Việt không?*

Oui (Có) [ ] Non (Không) [ ]

3.10 Si votre réponse est (Non) qui pensez-vous a la responsabilité d'enseigner le Vietnamien à vos enfants?

*Nếu quý vị trả lời (Không) thì theo quý vị ai là người có bổn phận dạy tiếng Việt cho con em của quý vị?*

Parents	Mission Catholique Vietnamienne	Communauté Vienamienne
Cha mẹ	Giáo xứ Việt Nam	Cộng Đoàn Việt Nam
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

3. 11 Est-il important pour vous que vos enfants apprennent le Vietnamien?  
*Đối với quý vị thì việc con cái học tiếng Việt có phải là điều quan trọng không?*
- |                       |                        |                         |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Très important        | Relativement important | Pas important du tout   |
| <i>Rất quan trọng</i> | <i>Hơi quan trọng</i>  | <i>Không quan trọng</i> |
| [ ]                   | [ ]                    | [ ]                     |

## SECTION 4: VOTRE VIE SOCIALE ET FAMILIALE

### PHẦN 4: ĐỜI SỐNG GIA ĐÌNH VÀ XÃ HỘI

- 4.1 (I) Appartenez-vous à une groupe ou à une organisation sociale?  
*Quý vị có thuộc về một nhóm hay một tổ chức xã hội nào không?*  
 Oui (Có) [ ] Non (Không) [ ]
- (ii) Si (Oui) quel est le nom de cette organisation?  
*Nếu (Có) thì tên của tổ chức đó là gì?*  
 .....
- (iii) Quels sont les intérêts communs de cette groupe ou de cette organisation?  
*Chủ đích sinh hoạt chung của tổ chức đó là gì?*  
 .....
- 4.2 (i) Etes-vous un membre de la Mission Catholique Vietnamienne à Paris?  
*Quý vị có phải là một phần tử của Giáo Xứ Việt Nam tại Paris không?*  
 Oui (Có) [ ] Non (Không) [ ]
- (ii) Selon vous est-il important d'appartenir à cette organisation religieuse?  
*Theo quý vị thì thuộc về Giáo Xứ Việt Nam có quan trọng không?*
- |                       |                        |                         |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Très important        | Relativement important | Pas important du tout   |
| <i>Rất quan trọng</i> | <i>Hơi quan trọng</i>  | <i>Không quan trọng</i> |
| [ ]                   | [ ]                    | [ ]                     |
- Donnez deux raisons pour votre réponse (*Xin nêu hai lý do*)  
 .....  
 .....
- (iii) Pensez-vous que les activités de cette organisation vous ont aidé à bien retenir votre langue Vietnamienne?  
*Quý vị có nghĩ rằng những sinh hoạt của Giáo Xứ Việt Nam đã giúp mình giữ được tiếng Việt không?*  
 Oui (Có) [ ] Non (Không) [ ]
- (iv) Pensez-vous que les activités de cette organisation ont aidé vos enfants à retenir votre langue Vietnamienne?  
*Quý vị có nghĩ rằng những sinh hoạt của Giáo Xứ Việt Nam đã giúp cho con cái quý vị giữ được tiếng Việt không?*  
 Oui (Có) [ ] Non (Không) [ ]

- (v) Est-ce que vos enfants ont étudié ou sont en train d'étudier le Vietnamien à l'école organisé par la Mission Catholique Vietnamienne?  
*Con của quý vị đã có hoặc đang học tiếng Việt tại Giáo Xứ Việt Nam không?*  
 Oui (Có) [ ] Non (Không) [ ]

- 4.3 Pensez-vous que votre vie sociale en France est:  
*Quý vị có nghĩ rằng đời sống xã hội của mình ở Pháp thì:*  
 (i) Aussi bonne que au Vietnam (tốt bằng ở Việt nam) [ ]  
 (ii) Meilleure (tốt hơn) [ ]  
 (iii) Moins bonne (không tốt bằng) [ ]

- 4.4 Avez-vous des parents ou des relations en France?  
*Quý vị có cha mẹ họ hàng bà con ở Pháp không?*  
 Oui (Có) [ ] Non (Không) [ ]

- 4.5 Avez-vous souvent vu vos relations en France?  
*Quý vị có thường gặp họ hàng bà con tại Pháp không?*  

Très souvent	De temps en temps	Jamais
<i>Rất thường xuyên</i>	<i>Đôi khi</i>	<i>Không bao giờ</i>
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

- 4.6 Vers qui vous tournez-vous d'abord quand vous avez besoin d'être aidé  
*Khi quý vị cần sự giúp đỡ thì quý vị chạy đến ai trước?*  

Famille	Amis	Organisation sociale
<i>Gia đình</i>	<i>Bạn bè</i>	<i>Cơ quan xã hội</i>
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

- 4.7 Voudriez-vous donner des information concernant trois de vos amis intimes:  
*Xin quý vị vui lòng cho các chi tiết sau đây về ba người bạn thân của quý vị*

- |                          |                |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| Origine ethnique         | (i). . . . .   |
| <i>Nguồn gốc sắc tộc</i> | (ii). . . . .  |
|                          | (iii). . . . . |
| Langue maternelle        | (i). . . . .   |
| <i>Tiếng mẹ đẻ</i>       | (ii). . . . .  |
|                          | (iii). . . . . |
| Occupation               | (i). . . . .   |
| <i>Nghề nghiệp</i>       | (ii). . . . .  |
|                          | (iii). . . . . |

## SECTION 5: IDENTITÉ ET ADAPTATION

### PHẦN 5: BẢN SẮC VÀ SỰ HỘI NHẬP

5.1 Sentez-vous que vous êtes adapté à la société française?

*Quý vị có cảm thấy là mình đã hội nhập vào xã hội Pháp?*

Entièrement

Partiellement

Pas du tout

Hoàn toàn

một phần nào

hoàn toàn không

[ ]

[ ]

[ ]

5.2 A present vous considérez-vous:

*Bây giờ quý vị có coi mình như là một người:*

Entièrement Vietnamien

50% Viet & 50% Français

Entièrement Français

Hoàn toàn Việt nam

50% Việt & 50% Pháp

Hoàn toàn Pháp

[ ]

[ ]

[ ]

5.3 Selon vous est-ce que votre adaptation à la vie française fut:

*Theo quý vị thì việc hội nhập vào đời sống Pháp:*

Facile

Relativement facile

Difficile

Très difficile

Dễ

Tương đối dễ

Khó

Rất khó

[ ]

[ ]

[ ]

[ ]

Donnez une ou deux raisons: *Xin nêu một hay hai lý do*

.....  
.....

5.4 Avez-vous jamais eu le désir de cacher votre origine Vietnamienne?

*Quý vị có bao giờ muốn dấu nguồn gốc Việt Nam của mình không?*

Oui (Có) [ ]

Non (Không) [ ]

5.5 êtes-vous jamais traité injustement en raison de votre origine ethnique?

*Quý vị có bao giờ bị kỳ thị vì nguồn gốc sắc tộc của quý vị không?*

Oui (Có) [ ]

Non (Không) [ ]

5.6 Si vous êtes célibataire, quelle est votre intention concernant le choix de votre époux/se:

*Nếu quý vị còn độc thân thì quý vị sẽ chọn vợ hay chồng là người:*

Vietnamien/ne

Français/e

Autre origine

Việt nam

Pháp

Sắc tộc khác

[ ]

[ ]

[ ]

5.7 Si vous êtes marié est-ce que votre époux/se est:

*Nếu quý vị có gia đình rồi thì người vợ hay chồng của quý vị là người:*

Vietnamien/ne

Français/e

Autre origine

Việt nam

Pháp

Sắc tộc khác

[ ]

[ ]

[ ]

5.8 Comment évaluez-vous l'importance des aspects culturels Vietnamiens suivants?  
*Quý vị đánh giá tầm quan trọng của các khía cạnh văn hóa Việt nam sau đây?*

Aspects de Culture	Très Important Rất quan trọng	Relativement Important Khá quan trọng	Pas Important Không quan trọng
(i) Langue Vietnamienne ( <i>Tiếng Việt</i> )			
(ii) Famille ( <i>Gia đình</i> )			
(iii) Religion ( <i>Tôn giáo</i> )			
(iv) Danse et Musique ( <i>Vũ, Nhạc</i> )			
(v) Littérature ( <i>Văn chương</i> )			
(vi) Histoire et Géographie ( <i>Sử, Địa</i> )			
(vii) Respect pour les âgées ( <i>Kính trọng người lớn tuổi</i> )			
(viii) Nouriture ( <i>Đồ ăn Việt-nam</i> )			

5.9 Avez-vous souvent

- (i) écouté les chansons Vietnamiennes?

*Quý vị có thường nghe các bài hát Việt nam không?*

Oui (*Có*) [ ] Non (*Không*) [ ]

- (ii) vu les vidéos Vietnamiens?

*Quý vị có thường xem video phim Việt nam không?*

Oui (*Có*) [ ] Non (*Không*) [ ]

- (iii) écouté les programmes en Vietnamien SBS Radio ou SBS TV?

*Quý vị có thường nghe hay xem các chương trình truyền thanh, truyền hình bằng tiếng Việt trên đài SBS không?*

Oui (*Có*) [ ] Non (*Không*) [ ]

- (iv) lu les journaux et magazines Vietnamiens?

*Quý vị có thường đọc báo chí Việt nam không?*

Oui (*Có*) [ ] Non (*Không*) [ ]

- (v) lu les livres Vietnamiens?

*Quý vị có thường đọc sách Việt nam không?*

Oui (*Có*) [ ] Non (*Không*) [ ]

- (vi) mangé les plats Vietnamiens?

*Quý vị có thường ăn đồ ăn Việt nam không?*

Oui (*Có*) [ ] Non (*Không*) [ ]

5.10 Quels sont les aspects de la vie Vietnamienne que vous voulez voir disparaître en France?

*Những khía cạnh nào trong đời sống của người Việt nam mà quý vị muốn bỏ đi khi sống tại Pháp?*

.....

- 5.11 Quelles sont les coutumes ou traditions Vietnamiennes que votre famille ont encore pratiquées en France?

*Những phong tục tập quán Việt nam nào mà còn đang được thực hành trong gia đình của quý vị tại Pháp?*

.....  
 .....

- 5.12 Est-ce que vous enseigneriez ces traditions-là à vos enfants?

*Quý vị sẽ dạy con cái quý vị những truyền thống đó không?*

Oui (Có) [ ] Non (Không) [ ]

Pourquoi? (Tại sao)?

.....  
 .....

- 5.13 Pensez-vous que le Gouvernement Français aurait pu faire mieux pour les immigrants en France?

*Quý vị có nghĩ rằng lẽ ra chính phủ Pháp có thể giúp đỡ những người di dân tại Pháp cách tích cực hơn không?*

Oui (Có) [ ] Non (Không) [ ]

Donnez votre opinion (xin cho ý kiến)

.....  
 .....

### Appendix 3: Questionnaire 3 for Young Respondents Aged 12-25 (QAY group)

Note: You may choose to answer the question either in English or in Vietnamese.

Please place a tick in the appropriate box(es) where necessary.

*Xin đánh dấu (X) vào những ô thích hợp khi trả lời.*

**Researcher's use only: Phần dành riêng cho người nghiên cứu.**

Questionnaire No. ....

Series .....

Date .....

Language .....

#### SECTION 1: PERSONAL DETAILS

##### PHẦN 1: CHI TIẾT CÁ NHÂN

1.1 Date of Birth ...../...../.....

*Ngày sinh* ...../...../.....

1.2 Place of Birth .....

*Nơi sinh* .....

1.3 Sex Male Female

*Phái tính* Nam [ ] Nữ [ ]

1.4 Marital Status: Married Single

*Tình trạng hôn nhân* Có gia đình Độc thân  
[ ] [ ]

1.5 Present Address .....

*Địa chỉ hiện tại* ..... Tel:.....

1.6 Present occupation: (if still at school please give the name of school and year you are in)

*Nghề nghiệp hiện tại:* .....

1.7 Highest level of education reached: .....

*Trình độ học vấn cao nhất:* .....

1.8 Parents' and grandparents' place of birth:

*Nơi sinh của cha mẹ và ông bà:*



Father	Mother	Grandfather	Grandmother
<i>Cha</i>	<i>Mẹ</i>	<i>Ông</i>	<i>Bà</i>
.....	.....	.....	.....

1.9 Parents' and grandparents' present address:

*Địa chỉ hiện tại của cha mẹ và ông bà:*

Parents (*Cha mẹ*)

.....

.....

Grandparents (*Ông bà*)

.....

1.10 Parents' and grandparents' occupation/s

*Nghề nghiệp của cha mẹ và ông bà:*

	Father	Mother	Grandfather	Grandmother
	<i>Cha</i>	<i>Mẹ</i>	<i>Ông</i>	<i>Bà</i>
In Vietnam				
<i>Tại Việt Nam</i>	.....	.....	.....	.....
In Australia	.....	.....	.....	.....
<i>Tại Úc</i>				

## SECTION 2: YOUR DECISION TO EMIGRATE

### PHẦN 2: QUYẾT ĐỊNH DI DÂN

2.1 Were you born in Australia? *Quý có sinh tại Úc không?*

Yes (*Có*) [ ] No (*Không*) [ ]

*If "Yes" go to question 2. 5 (Nếu trả lời "Có" xin trả lời tiếp câu 2.5)*

2.2 Date of Arrival in Australia: *Ngày tới Úc*

Date	Month	Year
<i>Ngày</i>	<i>Tháng</i>	<i>Năm</i>

.....

2.3 Reasons to arrive in Australia: *Lý do tới Úc*

(i) *Refugee: Tỵ nạn* ( )

(ii) *To re- unite with the family: Đoàn tụ gia đình* ( )

(iii) *Students: Sinh viên* ( )

(v) *Other reasons please specify* ( )

*Những lý do khác (Xin nói rõ)*

.....

2.4 Are you now pleased that you came to Australia?

*Bây giờ bạn có hài lòng là đã đến Úc không?*

Yes (Có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]

2.5 What in your opinion are the three main advantages for living in Australia?

*Theo ý kiến bạn thì ba điều lợi chính khi sống tại Úc là gì?*

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

and disadvantages? (và ba điểm bất lợi là gì?)

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

2.6 Would you advise young people in Vietnam to emigrate here?

*Quý vị có muốn khuyên giới trẻ ở Việt Nam di dân tới Úc không?*

Yes (Có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]

If your answered 'no' please explain briefly:

*Nếu quý vị trả lời (Không) thì xin giải thích ngắn gọn không:*

.....

2.7 Do you think your children will benefit from living in Australia?

*Quý vị có nghĩ rằng con cái quý vị sẽ được lợi khi sống tại Úc không?*

Yes (Có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]

If 'yes', in what way?

*Nếu có thì trong phương diện nào?*

.....

2.8 Do you feel welcome here in Australia?

*Quý vị có cảm thấy được tiếp đón nồng hậu tại Úc không?*

Yes (Có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]

2.9 Have you ever considered going to Vietnam to live?

*Có bao giờ quý vị nghĩ đến việc về Việt nam sống không?*

Yes (Có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]

Why? (Tại sao?). ....

**SECTION 3: YOUR EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE****PHẦN 3: KINH NGHIỆM HỌC ĐƯỜNG CỦA QUÝ VỊ**

3.1 In which country did you complete your primary school?

Bạn học tiểu học tại nước nào?

Australia (Úc)

[ ]

Vietnam

[ ]

Others (Nước khác)

[ ]

3.2 In which country did/do you attend your secondary school?

Bạn học trung học tại nước nào?

Australia (Úc)

[ ]

Vietnam

[ ]

Others (Nước khác)

[ ]

3.3 Schools attended (give name & location): Tên và địa chỉ các trường đã theo học:

(i) .....

(ii) .....

(iii) .....

3.4 Did you experience any kind of prejudice or discrimination at school in Australia?

Bạn có bao giờ cảm thấy bị kỳ thị tại trường học Úc không?

Yes (Có) [ ]

No (Không) [ ]

3.5 How do you describe your Australian school experience?

Bạn diễn tả kinh nghiệm học đường tại Úc của bạn thế nào?

Very good

Good

Bad

Rất tốt

Tốt

Xấu

[ ]

[ ]

[ ]

3.6 Did/do you attend University/Tafe College in Australia?

Bạn có đã hay đang học Đại Học tại Úc không?

Yes (Có) [ ]

No (Không) [ ]

If "yes" give the name of institution and course you have completed or are studying

Nếu "có" hãy cho biết tên trường và ngành học bạn đã tốt nghiệp hay đang học.

Institution (Trường).....

Course (Ngành).....

3.7 How do you describe your tertiary education experience in Australia?

Bạn diễn tả kinh nghiệm học đại học của bạn tại Úc thế nào?

Very good

Good

Bad

Rất tốt

Tốt

Xấu

[ ]

[ ]

[ ]

**SECTION 4: YOUR LINGUISTIC EXPERIENCE**  
**PHẦN 4: KINH NGHIỆM NGÔN NGỮ CỦA QUÝ VỊ**

**Language learning**

4.1 Did/do you learn Vietnamese at school in Australia?

Bạn có đã hay đang học tiếng Việt tại Úc không?

Yes (*Có*) [ ] No (*Không*) [ ]

If "yes" give name of the Vietnamese school

Nếu có cho biết tên trường tiếng Việt đó: .....

4.2 Give two reasons for your answer "yes" or "no" to question 4.1. above

Nêu hai lý do cho câu trả lời "có" hay "không" cho câu 4.1 ở trên.

.....  
 .....

4.3 How long have you learned Vietnamese in Australia?

Bạn học đã tiếng Việt bao lâu tại Úc?

	Time ( <i>thời gian</i> )
(i) R-7 ( <i>hết lớp 7</i> )	[ ]
(ii) Completed year 12 ( <i>hết lớp 12</i> )	[ ]
(iii) Year 12 and University ( <i>lớp 12 &amp; đại học</i> )	[ ]
(iv) Only one or two years ( <i>chỉ 1 hay 2 năm</i> )	[ ]
(v) None ( <i>không học chút nào</i> )	[ ]

4.4 Do you think that the Education Department in Australia has the responsibility to offer Vietnamese in schools so that you and those who wish to learn Vietnamese have the opportunity to do so?

Bạn có nghĩ rằng bộ giáo dục tại Úc có bổn phận mở chương trình tiếng Việt tại các trường cho bạn hay bất cứ ai muốn có cơ hội học tiếng Việt không?

Yes (*có*) [ ] No (*Không*) [ ]

4.5 If you answer "No" in the question above then who do you think have the responsibility to teach Vietnamese tại Úc?

Nếu quý vị trả lời "*Không*" cho câu hỏi trên thì quý vị nghĩ ai là người có phận vụ dạy tiếng Việt tại Úc?

<i>Parents</i>	<i>Vietnamese Religious Community</i>	<i>Vietnamese Community</i>
<i>Cha mẹ</i>	<i>Cộng Đoàn Tôn giáo VN</i>	<i>Cộng Đồng Người Việt</i>
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

4.6 In your opinion, is it important for you to learn Vietnamese?

Đối với bạn thì việc bạn học tiếng Việt có phải là điều quan trọng không?

*Very important*

*Relatively important*

*Not important*

*Rất quan trọng*

*Hơi quan trọng*

*Không quan trọng*

[ ]

[ ]

[ ]

Explain why? (Hãy giải thích tại sao)

.....  
 .....

### **Language proficiency**

4.7 How do you grade your Vietnamese and English language skills in

*a) understand, b) speak, c) read and d) write?* at the following age groups

(Show your proficiency level by placing a tick (X) in the appropriate space).

*Bạn lượng giá khả năng tiếng Việt và tiếng Anh của mình thế nào trong các kỹ năng a) Hiểu, b) Nói, c) Đọc và d) Viết hiện nay?*

*(Xin cho biết trình độ thành thạo của bạn bằng cách đánh dấu (X) vào ô thích hợp).*

Understand Hiểu		Speak Nói		Read Đọc		Write Viết	
VN	Eng	VN	Eng	VN	Eng	VN	Eng
At present	Very well Rất giỏi						
	Well Giỏi						
	A little Chút ít						
	Not at all Không chút nào						

Note: VN = Vietnamese (*Tiếng Việt*) Eng = English (*Tiếng Anh*)

4.8 If your overall proficiency in Vietnamese has substantially diminished or increased, please indicate in order of priority (1,2,3,4,5) what you consider to be the causes.

*Nếu sự thông thạo về Tiếng Việt của bạn đã tăng hay giảm xin ghi theo thứ tự ưu tiên (1,2,3,4,5) những lý do bạn nghĩ đã tạo nên sự kiện này:*

**My Vietnamese Proficiency has****DECREASED because**

**Sự thông thạo Tiếng Việt của tôi bị giảm sút vì:**

(Xin trả lời dùng số 1,2,3,4,5 theo thứ tự ưu tiên.  
Số 1 là quan trọng nhất và số 5 là ít quan trọng nhất)

Lack of parental support  
*Thiếu sự hỗ trợ của cha mẹ*

Lack of practice  
(eg. outside the home)  
*Thiếu thực hành (ngoài gia đình)*

Language not being taught at school  
*Ngôn ngữ không được dạy ở trường*

Change of residence  
*Thay đổi chỗ ở*

Other (please specify)  
*Yếu tố khác (xin nói rõ)*

Any other comments *(Xin cho bất cứ ý kiến nào khác quý vị muốn đóng góp về điểm này)* .....

**My Vietnamese Proficiency has****INCREASED because**

**Sự thông thạo Tiếng Việt của tôi gia tăng vì:**

(Please indicate in order of priority 1,2,3,4,5.  
No 1 is the most important and 5 is the least important)

Parental support  
*Nhờ sự hỗ trợ của cha mẹ*

Opportunity to practice  
(eg. outside the home)  
*Có cơ hội thực hành (ngoài gia đình)*

Formal instruction at school  
*Được dạy chính thức ở trường*

Change of residence  
*Thay đổi chỗ ở*

Other (please specify)  
*Yếu tố khác (xin nói rõ)*

**Language use**

4.9 What language would you use when speaking to each of the following people?

*Quý vị dùng ngôn ngữ nào khi nói chuyện với những người sau đây?*

	Always in <i>(Luôn dùng tiếng)</i>	Mainly in <i>(Thường dùng tiếng)</i>
Brother/s Sister/s: <i>Anh chị em</i>	.....	.....
Mother: <i>Mẹ</i>	.....	.....
Father : <i>Cha</i>	.....	.....
Grandparents : <i>Ông bà</i>	.....	.....
Other relatives : <i>Bà con khác</i>	.....	.....
Vietnamese-speaking friends: <i>(Bạn bè nói tiếng Việt Nam)</i>	.....	.....

- 4.10 What language/s do you use to write or ring your relatives and friends in Australia?

Bạn sử dụng tiếng gì khi viết thư hay điện thoại cho bà con bạn bè tại Úc?

.....

.....

- 4.11 What language/s do you use to write or ring your relatives and friends in Vietnam?

Bạn sử dụng tiếng gì khi viết thư hay điện thoại cho bà con bạn bè tại Việt Nam?

.....

.....

- 4.12 What language do you use in the following places:

Bạn dùng ngôn ngữ nào tại những nơi sau đây:

	Vietnamese	English
(i) Home ( <i>Ở nhà</i> )	[ ]	[ ]
(ii) School ( <i>Trường học</i> )	[ ]	[ ]
(iii) Church ( <i>Nhà thờ</i> )	[ ]	[ ]
(iv) Shop ( <i>Tiệm buôn</i> )	[ ]	[ ]

- 4.13 Do you want to maintain your Vietnamese language?

Quý vị có muốn giữ tiếng Việt của mình không?

*Yes (có)* [ ]      *No (Không)* [ ]

- 4.14 In your opinion, is it important for a Vietnamese person to be able to speak Vietnamese?

Theo quý vị thì một người Việt biết nói tiếng Việt có quan trọng không?

<i>Very important</i>	<i>Relatively important</i>	<i>Not important</i>
<i>Rất quan trọng</i>	<i>Hơi quan trọng</i>	<i>Không quan trọng</i>
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

## SECTION 5: YOUR SOCIAL AND FAMILY LIFE

### PHẦN 5: ĐỜI SỐNG GIA ĐÌNH VÀ XÃ HỘI

- 5.1 Do you belong to any social group or organisation?

Quý vị có sinh hoạt trong một nhóm hay một tổ chức xã hội nào không?

*Yes (có)* [ ]      *No (Không)* [ ]

If "Yes" give the name of the organisation.

Nếu "Có" xin cho tên của tổ chức đó

.....

What are the common aims of the organisation?

Mục đích tổng quát của tổ chức đó là gì?

.....  
 .....

5.2 Do you belong to any Vietnamese Religious Community or group in Australia?

Quý vị có thuộc về Cộng Đoàn Tôn Giáo Việt Nam nào tại Úc không?

Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]

If "Yes" give the name of that Religious Community

Nếu "Có" xin cho tên của Cộng Đoàn Tôn giáo đó

.....  
 .....

5.3 In your opinion, is it important for you to belong to that Religious Community?

Theo quý vị thì thuộc về một Cộng Đoàn Tôn Giáo Việt Nam có quan trọng không?

Very important

Relatively important

Not important

Rất quan trọng

Hơi quan trọng

Không quan trọng

[ ]

[ ]

[ ]

Give two reasons for your response (Xin nêu hai lý do)

.....  
 .....

5.4. Do you think that the activities of your Vietnamese Religious Community have helped you to maintain the Vietnamese Language?

Quý vị có nghĩ rằng những sinh hoạt của Cộng Đoàn Tôn Giáo Việt Nam nơi bạn đang sinh hoạt đã giúp mình giữ được Tiếng Việt không?

Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]

Give two reasons for your response (Xin nêu hai lý do)

.....  
 .....

5.5. Do you think that your social life in Australia is:

Quý vị có nghĩ rằng đời sống xã hội của quý vị tại Úc thì:

(i) As good as in Vietnam (tốt bằng ở Việt nam) [ ]

(ii) Better (tốt hơn) [ ]

(iii) Not as good (không tốt bằng) [ ]

5.6. Do you have parents or relatives in Australia

Quý vị có cha mẹ hay họ hàng bà con tại Úc không?

Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]



5.7 Do you often see your relatives in Australia?

Quý vị có thường gặp bà con họ hàng tại Úc không?

<i>Very often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
<i>Rất thường xuyên</i>	<i>Đôi khi</i>	<i>Không bao giờ</i>
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

5.8 When you need help to whom do you turn to first?

Khi quý vị cần sự giúp đỡ thì quý vị chạy đến ai trước tiên?

<i>Family</i>	<i>Friends</i>	<i>Social organisation</i>
<i>Gia đình</i>	<i>Bạn bè</i>	<i>Cơ quan xã hội</i>
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

5.9 Please give the ethnic origine of three of your closest friends.

Xin bạn vui lòng cho biết nguồn gốc sắc tộc về ba người bạn thân nhất củamình:

(Eg: Vietnamese, Italian, Greek... TD: Việt Nam, Ý, Hy Lạp...)

Ethnic origine	(i).....
Nguồn gốc sắc tộc	(ii).....
	(iii).....

## SECTION 6: IDENTITY AND ADAPTATION

### Phần 6: BẢN SẮC VÀ SỰ HỘI NHẬP

6.1 I like to identify myself as (*Tôi thích coi mình là*)

Australian (*Người Úc*) [ ]

Vietnamese (*Người Việt*) [ ]

Vietnamese Australian (*Người Úc gốc Việt*) [ ]

6.2 Are you proud of your Vietnamese background?

Quý vị có cảm thấy hãnh diện về nguồn gốc Việt nam của mình không?

*Yes (có)* [ ] *No (Không)* [ ]

6.3 Do you feel that you have fully integrated into the Australian society?

Quý vị có cảm thấy là mình đã hoàn toàn hội nhập vào xã hội Úc không?

<i>Fully</i>	<i>Partly</i>	<i>Not at all</i>
<i>Hoàn toàn</i>	<i>Một phần nào</i>	<i>Hoàn toàn không</i>
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

6.4 How do you evaluate the importance of Vietnamese culture of the following items?

*Bạn đánh giá tầm quan trọng của các khía cạnh văn hóa Việt Nam sau đây thế nào?*

Aspects of culture	Very important Rất quan trọng	Relatively important Hơi quan trọng	Not important Không quan trọng
(i) Viet Language ( <i>Tiếng Việt</i> )			
(ii) Family ( <i>Gia đình</i> )			
(iii) Religion ( <i>Tôn giáo</i> )			
(iv) Dance & music ( <i>múa &amp; ca nhạc</i> )			
(v) Literature ( <i>Văn chương</i> )			
(vi) History & Geography ( <i>Sử ký &amp; Địa lý</i> )			
(vii) Respect for the elderly ( <i>Kính người lớn tuổi</i> )			
(viii) Viet food ( <i>Đồ ăn Việt</i> )			

6.5 Do you often do the following activities:

(i) Listen to Vietnamese songs?

*Quý vị có thường nghe các bài hát Việt nam không?*

*Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]*

(ii) Watch Vietnamese videos ?

*Quý vị có thường xem videos tiếng Việt nam không?*

*Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]*

(iii) Listen to the Vietnamese programs on SBS radio or watch SBS TV?

*Nghe hay xem các chương trình truyền thanh truyền hình tiếng Việt trên đài SBS không? Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]*

(iv) Read Vietnamese newspapers and magazines?

*Quý vị có thường đọc báo tiếng Việt không?*

*Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]*

(v) Read Vietnamese books?

*Quý vị có thường đọc sách tiếng Việt không?*

*Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]*

(vi) Eat Vietnamese food?

*Quý vị có thường ăn đồ ăn Việt Nam không?*

*Yes (có) [ ] No (Không) [ ]*

- (vii) Participate in the Vietnamese festivals celebrations (eg Vietnamese New Year and Full Moon festival) organised in Australia?

*Quý vị có tham gia những cuộc lễ tết như Tết Nguyên Đán, Tết Trung Thu được tổ chức tại Úc không?*

*Yes (có) [ ]      No (Không) [ ]*

- 6.6 What aspects of Vietnamese life that you would like to see disappear in Australia?

*Những khía cạnh nào nếp sống Việt Nam mà bạn muốn bỏ đi khi sống tại Úc?*

.....  
 .....

- 6.7 What are the Vietnamese customs and traditions your family still keep in Australia?

*Những phong tục tập quán Việt nam nào mà gia đình bạn còn đang giữ khi sống tại Úc?*

.....  
 .....

- 6.8 Will you teach these customs and traditions to your children in the future?

*Quý vị có dạy các phong tục tập quán đó cho con cái của quý vị không?*

*Yes (có) [ ]      No (Không) [ ]*

*Why? (Tại sao?)*

.....  
 .....

- 6.9 Do you think the Australian Government should have treated Vietnamese migrants better?

*Bạn có nghĩ rằng lẽ ra chính phủ Úc phải đối xử với người di dân Việt Nam cách tốt đẹp hơn không?*

*Yes (có) [ ]      No (Không) [ ]*

*Please give your comments (Xin cho ý kiến)*

.....  
 .....

Thank you for taking your time to fill in this questionnaire. Your help is most appreciated, and your information will be kept confidential.

Xin chân thành cảm ơn quý vị đã dành thời giờ quý báu của quý vị trả lời bản câu hỏi này. Tất cả dữ kiện quý vị cung cấp trong bản thăm dò ý kiến này sẽ được giữ mật và chỉ dùng trong dự án nghiên cứu này thôi.

## Appendix 4: Oral and Written Memoir Guided Questions

### Initial settlement

1. Bạn sinh năm nào? Sinh ở đâu?  
What year were you born? Where were you born?
2. Bạn tới Úc năm nào? Xin cho biết cảm nghiệm của bạn khi mới tới Úc.  
When did you arrive in Australia? Describe your first experience of this country.
3. Tại sao bạn tới Úc và tới bằng cách nào? Bạn có thể diễn tả cách ngắn gọn chuyến đi của bạn không?  
How and why did you come to Australia? Please summarize your journey
4. Xin bạn cho biết những trở ngại lớn nhất mà bạn và gia đình bạn gặp phải khi mới tới Úc? Và bạn đã làm thế nào để vượt qua những trở ngại đó?  
Can you explain the greatest challenges that your family had to face when you first arrived in Australia and how did you overcome them?

### Work life

5. Bạn có thể nói về cảm nghiệm đầu tiên của bạn tại sở làm tại Úc không?  
Can you talk about your experience of your first job in Australia?
6. Theo bạn thì người Việt phải làm gì để có thể thành công trong cuộc sống tại Úc?  
In your opinion what must Vietnamese do to become successful in Australia?
7. Bạn có cảm thấy bị thiệt thòi khi sống tại Úc vì mình là người Việt không?  
Do you feel disadvantaged living in Australia because you are Vietnamese?
8. Bạn có bị kỳ thị hay đối xử cách bất công vì mình là người Việt sống tại Úc không?  
Living in Australia, have you ever been treated unjustly or discriminated against because you are Vietnamese?

### Cultural life

9. Bạn có hãnh diện hay xấu hổ vì mình là người Việt khi sống tại Úc? Tại sao?  
Living in Australia, do you feel a sense of pride or shame of your Vietnamese identity. Please explain why.
10. Theo bạn thì một người Việt, không biết nói tiếng Việt có còn là người Việt nam không? Tại sao?  
Do you think that a Vietnamese who does not speak the language can still be considered as a Vietnamese? Explain why.
11. Theo bạn thì người Việt có cần phải hội nhập vào xã hội Úc không? Nếu có thì tại sao và thế nào?  
Do you think that Vietnamese people need to integrate themselves into the Australian society? Give reasons to support your answer.
12. Bạn có nghĩ rằng người Việt ta cần phải bảo tồn ngôn ngữ và văn hóa của mình tại Úc không?  
In your opinion, should Vietnamese people maintain their language and culture in Australia? Give reasons to support your answer.
13. Để bảo tồn văn hóa Việt tại Úc thì bạn nghĩ ta phải làm gì?

What do you think Vietnamese people should do to maintain their culture in Australia?

14. Theo bạn thì giới trẻ Việt nam có cần phải học ngôn ngữ và văn hóa của họ khi sống tại Úc không?

In your opinion, do young Vietnamese need to study their language and culture while living in Australia?

15. Bạn hãy cho biết 3 hay 4 phong tục, tập quán hay sắc thái văn hóa Việt nam mà bạn cho là quan trọng nhất, người Úc gốc Việt cần phải giữ khi sống tại Úc?

Name 3 or 4 traditions or aspects of Vietnamese culture which you consider most important for Vietnamese-Australians to keep while living in Australia.

### **Family life**

16. Bạn thường nghe người ta ca tụng giới trẻ Việt nam hải ngoại rất thành công trong việc học tại Úc. Theo bạn thì những yếu tố nào đã tạo nên sự thành công đó?

You often heard people praising Vietnamese youth for their academic success in Australia. In your opinion, what has created that success?

17. Bạn có kinh nghiệm đó trong gia đình bạn không? Xin chia sẻ.

Do you experience that in your family? Please share that experience.

18. Trong gia đình bạn mọi người sử dụng tiếng Anh hay tiếng Việt để liên hệ với nhau? Tại sao?

In your family does everyone use English or Vietnamese for communicating with each other? Please explain why.

19. Bạn có cho con cái bạn đi học tiếng Việt không? Tại sao?

Do your children study Vietnamese? Please explain why.

20. Bạn có thể cho ý kiến về đời sống gia đình hiện nay của người Việt nam tại Úc không? Đặc biệt là sự liên hệ giữa cha mẹ và con cái.

Do you have ideas about Vietnamese family life in Australia at present?

Especially the relationships between parents and children

21. Bạn có thấy điều gì trở ngại khi con cái mình lập gia đình với người thuộc sắc tộc khác không? Tại sao?

Do you have any objection if your children choose to marry someone of a different cultural background? Please explain why.

### **Social & Spiritual life**

22. Bạn có sinh hoạt trong đoàn thể hay tổ chức nào của người Úc không? Nếu có xin chia sẻ ngắn gọn.

Do you participate in the activities of any Australian organisation or association?

If yes, please explain briefly.

23. Bạn có sinh hoạt trong đoàn thể hay tổ chức nào của người Việt tại Úc không? Nếu có xin chia sẻ ngắn gọn.

Do you participate in the activities of any Vietnamese organisation or association? If yes, please explain briefly.

24. Bạn có tham gia vào các sinh hoạt của Cộng Đồng Công Giáo người Việt tại Úc không?

Do you participate in the Vietnamese Catholic community in Australia?

Nếu có thì xin cho biết rõ cộng đồng nào và đồng thời cho biết về các sinh hoạt thường xuyên của bạn trong cộng đồng này

thí dụ: thường xuyên tham dự thánh lễ

gia nhập hội đoàn, phong trào v.v...

tĩnh tâm hay các sinh hoạt khác

If yes, please give the name and describe your regular activities in that community

for example: your regular Mass attendance

you are member of a particular group or movement etc...

you attend retreats organised by the community or any other activities

25. Tại sao bạn chọn sinh hoạt trong cộng đồng công giáo người Việt thay vì sinh hoạt trong một xứ đạo Úc?

Why did you participate in a Vietnamese Catholic community instead of an Australian Catholic parish?

26. Bạn nghĩ gì về các sinh hoạt tôn giáo của người Việt tại Úc?

What do you think about the religious activities of the Vietnamese in Australia?

27. Bạn nghĩ gì về các sinh hoạt của các đoàn thể và tổ chức của người Việt tại Úc?

What do you think about the activities of the Vietnamese community organisations in Australia?

28. Những sinh hoạt này có cần thiết và giúp ích trong việc bảo tồn văn hóa của người Việt tại Úc không?

Have these community activities helped the Vietnamese to maintain their culture in Australia?

29. Bạn đã trở lại Việt Nam lần nào chưa? Mục đích chính của chuyến đi đó là gì?

Have you ever returned to Vietnam? What was the main purpose of your trip

30. Bạn có nghĩ rằng một ngày kia bạn sẽ trở về sống tại Việt Nam không? Tại sao?

Do you want to return to live in Vietnam? Explain why.

31. Bạn còn có ý kiến gì khác đóng góp cho phần nghiên cứu này không?

Do you have any question or any idea you want to share about this research?

### **Words of thanks**

Xin chân thành cảm ơn bạn đã giúp cho công việc nghiên cứu này qua phần trả lời các câu hỏi trên đây. Tất cả những trả lời của bạn sẽ được giữ bí mật và thận trọng sử dụng trong việc nghiên cứu này thôi. Danh tính của các bản trả lời sẽ không bao giờ được tiết lộ theo đúng quy luật bắt buộc của các dự án nghiên cứu thuộc đại học Adelaide.

Thank you for your time and your participation in this research. Your responses will be used for this research only. Your names and personal information will be kept confidential according to the research regulations of the University of Adelaide.

## Appendix 5: Oral Memoir Guided Questions in French

1. Comment êtes-vous arrivé en France? Quel l'age avez - vous en ce temps la?
2. Où habitez-vous depuis votre arrivée en France?
3. Voulez-vous me parler de votre vie en France par exemple votre experience à l'ecole, à l'université, au travail...
4. Est-ce que vous manquez de votre famille au Vietnam?
5. Comment les gens vous ont reçu en France? Sentez-vous que vous êtes bien accueilli dans ce pays?
6. Pourquoi avez-vous étudié la langue Vietnamienne en France? Est-ce que vous pouvez me parler de votre experience d'apprendre la langue Vietnamienne en France?
7. Quelles sont les attitudes des jeunes Vietnamiens en France envers leur pays Vietnam?
8. Pensez-vous que les jeunes Vietnamien en France devraient apprendre Vietnamien?
9. Quelles sont les coutumes et les traditions Vietnamien que vous connaissez?
10. Selon vous, est-ce qu'il-y-a des coutumes or traditions qu'on ne doit pas retenir en France? Donnez quelque exemples et expliquez vos raisons.
11. Quels sont les aspects de la culture Vietnamienne vous voulez voir disparaître?
12. Pensez-vous que vos enfants devraient apprendre la langue et la culture Vietnamienne?
13. Êtes-vous jamais maltraité par les gens dans la rue ou à l'ecole en France?
14. Que pensez-vous de votre identité Vietnamienne? Fier or honte de votre origine?
15. Pensez-vous que les jeunes Vietnamien devraient se marier avec les Vietnamiens? Pourquoi?
16. Êtes-vous retourné au Vietnam récemment? Que pencez-vous du Vietnam maintenant?
17. Pensez-vous de retourner pour vivre au Vietnam un jour?
18. Quelle language parlez-vous à la maison avec vos parents, grand parents et vos frères et soeurs?
19. Quelle language parlez-vous avec vos amis et les autre Vietnamiens?
20. Est-ce qu'il-y-a quelque chose que vous voulez me dire?

Merci beaucoup pour votre temps et vos réponses.

## **Appendix 6: Interview Questions for Chaplains of Vietnamese Catholic Communities**

1. Xin cha cho biết Giáo xứ /Cộng Đồng được thành lập

Can you tell me about the establishment of your parish/community?

- khi nào? when?
- do ai? by whom?
- với mục đích thế nào? for what purpose?

2. Giáo xứ / Cộng Đồng Việt Nam hiện nay được tổ chức thế nào?

How is your parish/Vietnamese community currently organised?

3. Sinh hoạt của Giáo xứ /Cộng Đồng như thế nào trong các lãnh vực

How are the activities of your parish/community in areas such as

- phụng vụ- liturgy
- xã hội- social activities
- văn hóa- cultural activities

4. Những người đến Giáo xứ/Cộng Đồng dự lễ thường xuyên là ai và con số khoảng bao nhiêu ạ?

Who are the people regularly attending Mass at your parish/community and approximately how many are there?

5. Sau năm 1975 thì số người đến dự lễ tại Giáo xứ/Cộng Đồng có tăng nhiều không?

After 1975 did the number of people attending Mass at your parish/community increase or decrease?

6. Chính phủ hay Giáo hội có hỗ trợ gì về vấn đề tài chánh cho Giáo xứ/Cộng Đồng không?

Did the government or the Church support your parish/community financially?

7. Giáo xứ/Cộng Đồng lúc đầu có mục đích bảo tồn và phát huy văn hóa và ngôn ngữ mẹ cho trẻ em Việt Nam không ạ?

Did your parish/community have a particular objective of promoting language and culture maintenance for Vietnamese children since the beginning?

8. Theo cha thì Giáo xứ/Cộng Đồng có trách nhiệm đó không ạ?

In your opinion father, should your parish/community be responsible for this?

9. Thanh niên nam nữ đi dự lễ hoặc tham gia sinh hoạt của Giáo xứ/Cộng Đồng từ khi mới thành lập tới giờ có tăng hay giảm không?

Since your parish/community was first established and until now, has the number of Vietnamese youths attending Mass or participating in community activities increased or decreased?



## 10. Các hội đoàn như

In the groups within your parish/community such as

- Ca đoàn- Choir
- Đoàn Thanh niên- Youth Group
- Thiếu Nhi Thánh Thể- Eucharistic Movement Group
- Legio Marie- Legion of Mary
- Cursillo- Cursillo Movement
- Các bà mẹ- Catholic Women Group

Có chương trình sinh hoạt như thế nào? Họ thường sinh hoạt bằng tiếng Việt hay tiếng bản xứ như tiếng Pháp / tiếng Anh?

What are their activities? Do they usually conduct their activities in Vietnamese or in their host language such as French/English?

## 11. Giáo xứ/Cộng Đồng có những sinh hoạt thường xuyên để duy trì và phát triển tiếng Việt và văn hóa Việt Nam không ạ?

Does your parish/community have regular activities to maintain and develop Vietnamese language and culture?

## 12. Giáo xứ/Cộng Đồng có chương trình dạy tiếng Việt không ạ? và bảo tồn ngôn ngữ Việt Nam cho con trẻ Việt Nam công giáo có phải là một trong những mục tiêu sinh hoạt của giáo xứ/Cộng Đồng không ạ?

Does your parish/community have a Vietnamese school for children? Is maintaining the Vietnamese language and culture for children one of the aims of your parish/community?

## 13. Các em học giáo lý bằng tiếng gì ạ?

In what language is the religious instruction for children conducted?

## 14. Giáo xứ/Cộng Đồng có Thánh Lễ bằng tiếng Pháp/Anh cho trẻ em không ạ?

Does your parish/community celebrate Mass in French/English for children?

## 16. Cha thường làm phép cưới cho người Việt ở đây. Vậy cha có thấy nhiều cuộc hôn nhân Việt- Pháp hay Việt-Úc trong Giáo xứ/Cộng Đồng không ạ?

Father, you have given the sacrament of marriage to many Vietnamese couples here. Do you notice many mixed marriages of Vietnamese-French or Vietnamese-Australian couples in your parish/community?

## 17. Cha nghĩ thế nào về tương lai của Giáo xứ/Cộng Đồng? Chúng ta có cần phải duy trì Giáo xứ/Cộng Đồng Việt Nam mãi mãi không ạ?

Father, what do you think about the future of your parish/community? Do we need to preserve the structure of the Vietnamese parish/community as it is forever?

## 18. Cha nhìn tương lai của tiếng Việt tại Pháp/Úc như thế nào?

Father, how do you view the future of the Vietnamese language in France or in Australia?

19. Xin cha cho biết ý kiến là một người Việt không biết tiếng Việt thì họ có phải là người Việt không?

Father, in your opinion, can a Vietnamese person who does not know the Vietnamese language be considered as Vietnamese?

20. Cha có hài lòng về cuộc sống tại Pháp/Úc không? Tại sao?

Father, are you satisfied with your life in France/Australia? Why?

21. Xin cha cho biết vài cảm nghiệm của cha lúc đầu khi mới tới Pháp/Úc?

Father, could you share your experience when you first arrived in France/Australia?

22. Cha cảm nghiệm thế nào về việc hội nhập của mình vào xã hội Pháp? Úc?

Father, how was your experience of integrating into French society/Australian society?

23. Cha có bao giờ cảm thấy xấu hổ hay có nhu cầu là phải dấu nguồn gốc Việt Nam của mình không?

Father, have you ever felt ashamed of or felt a need to hide your Vietnamese identity?

24. Những người bạn thân nhất của cha là người Việt hay người Pháp/Úc?

Father, are your closest friends Vietnamese or French/Australian?

25. Cha cảm nghiệm thế nào về việc hội nhập của người Việt nói chung và của người công giáo nói riêng vào xã hội địa phương tại Pháp/Úc?

Father, what is your opinion on the integration of Vietnamese people generally, and Vietnamese Catholics in particular, into the host society in France/Australia?

Xin chân thành cảm ơn cha đã dành thời giờ cho cuộc nói chuyện này và ngoài những điểm đã đề cập cha còn có ý kiến gì thêm không ạ?

Thank you very much for your time and your support for this research project. Do you have any questions or any ideas that you would like to share with me for this project?

## Appendix 7: Survey Letter from the Researcher

Adelaide ngày 30 tháng 10 năm 2003

Kính gửi: .....

***V/v: Dự án nghiên cứu về vấn đề bảo tồn ngôn ngữ và văn hóa của người Việt hải ngoại. Tại Đại Học Adelaide***

Kính thưa quý vị hiện nay tôi đang thu thập dữ kiện cho một dự án nghiên cứu tại Đại Học Adelaide về vấn đề bảo tồn ngôn ngữ và văn hóa của người Việt Nam tại Úc và tại Pháp. Dự án này cần thu thập tài liệu rộng rãi trong cộng đồng người Việt tại Úc và đặc biệt là cộng đồng Người Việt tại Nam Úc. Vì thế, tôi viết thư này để xin sự hỗ trợ đặc biệt của quý vị bằng hai cách cụ thể sau đây:

1. Xin quý vị vui lòng điền vào bản thăm dò ý kiến đính kèm và gửi lại cho tôi trong phong thư có dán tem dính kèm càng sớm càng tốt. Trễ nhất là trước ngày 15/11/03. Quý vị có thể trả lời bằng tiếng Anh hay tiếng Việt tùy ý thích.
2. Sau khi thu lại bản câu hỏi, tôi sẽ xin mời một số người tham gia trong cuộc phỏng vấn để quý vị có cơ hội đóng góp ý kiến cách rộng rãi và chi tiết hơn cho dự án nghiên cứu này. Rất mong những ai được mời phỏng vấn vui lòng bớt chút thời giờ hợp tác trong việc này vì lợi ích chung.

Thiết tưởng đây là một dự án nghiên cứu đầu tiên tại Úc có tầm vóc rộng rãi trong lãnh vực bảo tồn ngôn ngữ và văn hóa của người Việt sau gần ba mươi năm người Việt định cư tại đây.

Tôi hy vọng rằng kết quả của dự án nghiên cứu này sẽ được các cơ quan giáo dục và chính quyền sử dụng vào những mục đích có lợi ích cho việc bảo tồn ngôn ngữ và văn hóa của cộng đồng người Việt chúng ta và đặc biệt là các thế hệ trẻ trong tương lai.

Theo quy luật nghiên cứu của Đại Học Adelaide thì các câu hỏi dùng trong bản thăm dò ý kiến đã phải được Đại Học chấp thuận. Các dữ kiện thu thập được qua các cuộc phỏng vấn cũng như các bản thăm dò ý kiến phải được giữ kín và chỉ dùng trong dự án nghiên cứu thôi. Khi trích dẫn những chi tiết trả lời trong dự án sẽ không có tên người trả lời. Nếu quý vị có gì thắc mắc về bản thăm dò ý kiến hay không rõ phải trả lời thế nào thì xin liên lạc với tôi qua số điện thoại Mob (0419) 807 887 hay (08) 8351 3054.

Một lần nữa rất mong sự hỗ trợ của quý vị cho công việc này. Mong nhận được bản thăm dò ý kiến quý vị gửi lại thật sớm. Xin chân thành cảm ơn và cầu chúc quý vị luôn gặp mọi sự an lành may mắn.

Kính thư,

*Signature of the researcher*

Sr Marie Trần thị Niên RSM; OAM.

## Translation of Appendix 7 - The Survey Letter from the researcher

Adelaide 30th of October 2003

To: .....

Re: *Research on the topic of language and culture maintenance of Vietnamese immigrants in Australia and France. PhD thesis, Adelaide University.*

Dear all,

I would like to invite your participation in a research project at Adelaide University on the language and culture maintenance of Vietnamese immigrants in Australia and France. For this study, I need to collect data widely from members of the Vietnamese community in Australia, especially the Vietnamese Catholic community in South Australia. Therefore, I write this letter to ask for your special support in the following two ways:

1. Please fill in the attached questionnaire and send it back to me in the enclosed stamped envelope **before 15/11/03**. You can answer the questions in English or Vietnamese.
2. After I have collected the questionnaire, I will invite a number of people to participate in an interview so that you will have the opportunity to contribute to this project at a deeper level.

This is the first study on a large scale which tries to explore the topic of Vietnamese language and culture maintenance among Vietnamese immigrants after thirty years of their re-settlement in Australia/France.

I hope that the results of this study will offer some practical guidance to educational authorities and the government to implement educational and social policies and programs for the benefit of the Vietnamese people, especially for future generations of Vietnamese people in Australia/France.

According to the regulations of Adelaide University, this research questionnaire has been approved by the appropriate authority of the University. All the responses collected through interviews or questionnaire must be kept confidential and are only allowed to be used for this study. When the researcher quotes information from a particular respondent their name and identity will be kept confidential. If you have any queries about the questionnaire or if you are not sure how to respond to the questionnaire, please feel free to contact me via mobile phone (0419) 807 887 or (08) 8351 3054.

Once again, I would like to ask your support for this study. I am looking forward to receiving your response to the questionnaire as soon as possible. Thank you most sincerely, and with my very best wishes.

Yours Sincerely,

*Signature of the researcher*

Sr Marie Trần thị Niên RSM; OAM.

## Appendix 8: Profile of Oral Memoir Respondents from France

<b>Memoir No</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age in 2001</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Birthplace</b>	<b>Arrival date</b>
1	couple	38 and 41	factory worker	South Vietnam	2/02/1984
2	female	29	uni student	Saigon Vietnam	0/01/1982
3	male	79	retired pensioner	North Vietnam	27/07/1972
4	female	78	retired pensioner	North Vietnam	4/07/1951
5	female	75	pastoral work	North Vietnam	1/02/1971
6	male	53	manager /teacher	North Vietnam	1/02/1973
7	male	52	school councillor	North Vietnam	31/08/1979
8	male	59	teacher	North Vietnam	13/10/1983
9	male	44	photographer	South Vietnam	20/08/1980
10	male	63	sickness allowance	North Vietnam	29/06/1984
11	female	53	business	Centre Vietnam	21/10/1966
12	male	27	student	France	
13	male	31	security officer	Saigon Vietnam	19/08/1985

## Appendix 9: Profile of Oral Memoir Respondents from Australia

<b>Memoir No</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age in 2003</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Birthplace</b>	<b>Arrival date</b>
14	male	18	student	Refugee Camp, Thailand	1988
15	male	18	student	Refugee Camp, Hong Kong	1986
16	female	17	student	Adelaide, Australia	
17	female	17	student	Adelaide, Australia	
18	female	17	student	South Vietnam	1993
19	female	18	student	Darwin, Australia	
20	male	16	student	Adelaide, Australia	
21	female	18	student	Adelaide, Australia	
22	female	23	student	Saigon, Vietnam	1989
23	female	37	specialist doctor	Saigon, Vietnam	8/12/1983
24	female	27	public service	Saigon, Vietnam	1991
25	male	33	engineer	Saigon, Vietnam	1987
26	female	51	secondary teacher	My Tho, Vietnam	14/03/1985
27	female	40	secondary teacher	Saigon, Vietnam	17/07/1984
28	male	32	secondary teacher	Saigon, Vietnam	1981
29	female	47	primary teacher	Saigon, Vietnam	27/06/1981
30	female	53	secondary teacher	South Vietnam	1974 - Nov
31	male	58	secondary teacher	North Vietnam	16/10/1986
32	male	58	Laundry supervisor	Nam Dinh, Vietnam	11/09/1984
33	male	48	Sick pension	South Vietnam	1993
34	female	45	ethnic sch teacher	Lam Dong, Vietnam	13/05/1982
35	female	38	factory worker	Minh Hai, Vietnam	3/01/1985
36	male	53	small business	North Vietnam	8/03/1984
37	male	52	small business	North Vietnam	8/04/1980
38	male	53	sewing business	Bui Chu, Vietnam	30/09/1992
39	female	38	sewing factory	Saigon, Vietnam	29/11/1984
40	male	39	factory worker	Saigon, Vietnam	29/11/1984
41	male	49	small business	Hai Duong, Vietnam	27/09/1983
42	couple	67 and 63	self-employed	South Vietnam	1980
43	male	78	retired pensioner	North Vietnam	1990
44	female	72	retired pensioner	North Vietnam	1978
45	male	66	retired pensioner	North Vietnam	1993
46	male	69	retired pensioner	North Vietnam	1991
47	female	52	public service	South Vietnam	1978
48	female	56	office manager	South Vietnam	1983
49	female	53	housewife	North Vietnam	17/04/1991
50	male	46	catholic priest	South Vietnam	19/11/1979
51	male	64	volunteer work	North Vietnam	8/12/1983
52	male	61	self-employed	North Vietnam	21/11/1977
53	male	58	volunteer work	South Vietnam	1979
54	female	74	retired pensioner	South Vietnam	1986

## Appendix 10: Profile of Written Memoir Respondents from Australia

<b>Memoir No</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age in 2004</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Birthplace</b>	<b>Arrival date</b>
1	male	17	secondary student	Australia	
2	male	16	secondary student	Australia	
3	female	15	secondary student	Australia	
4	female	16	secondary student	Australia	
5	female	16	secondary student	Australia	
6	female	17	secondary student	Australia	
7	female	18	secondary student	Refu Camp, Thailand	1987
8	male	17	secondary student	Australia	
9	female	16	secondary student	Australia	
10	male	17	secondary student	Refu Camp, Malaysia	28/06/1988
11	female	17	secondary student	Australia	
12	male	17	secondary student	Australia	
13	male	16	secondary student	Australia	
14	male	17	secondary student	Vietnam	15/12/1996
15	female	17	secondary student	Vietnam	15/03/2004
16	male	18	secondary student	Vietnam	15/04/2004

## Appendix 11: Examples of Oral & Written Memoirs

### Oral Memoir from Vietnamese - French Respondent

#### Oral Memoir No 9 in Vietnamese

**Interviewer:** Cảm ơn anh H thứ nhất là đã giúp cho Sơ rất nhiều trong dịp Sơ ghé Paris để làm công việc nghiên cứu này và hôm nay lại còn dành thời giờ để cho Sơ nói chuyện một chút xíu. Có một số những câu hỏi Sơ nghĩ là nếu mà anh cảm thấy anh muốn trả lời theo chiều hướng nào thì tùy thôi. Đây là những câu hỏi gợi ý chứ không có bắt buộc là phải trả lời như thế nào hết. Anh H tới Pháp từ năm nào vậy?

**Interviewee:** Năm 1981 ạ.

**Interviewer:** Hồi đó anh đi với tính cách nào vậy?

**Interviewee:** Dạ đi vượt biên, thì qua bên Na-Uy là năm 1980 và ở bên đó một năm, rồi tại vì cha mẹ bên này nên cha mẹ bảo lãnh sang.

**Interviewer:** Vậy là cả gia đình anh hồi đó sang đây à?

**Interviewee:** Không ạ. Lúc đó đi có một mình tại vì lúc đó cháu đầu tiên mới có mấy tháng, chưa được một tuổi thành ra cũng nguy hiểm, vì vậy để bố đi một mình trước rồi bảo lãnh sau. Năm năm sau mới bảo lãnh qua.

**Interviewer:** Vậy tức là chị chỉ mới qua đây thôi hả?

**Interviewee:** Năm 1984.

**Interviewer:** Anh H cho Sơ biết cái cảm nghiệm của anh khi mà mới đặt chân lên nước Pháp này như thế nào lúc ban đầu, anh có còn nhớ không?

**Interviewee:** Tôi đã ở một năm ở bên xứ Na-Uy thành ra qua đây nó vẫn có một cái so sánh khác. Qua bên này mình thấy nó thoải mái hơn ở bên Na-Uy tại vì người họ cũng nhỏ nhỏ giống mình, tóc nó cũng hung đen, hơi đỏ giống mình, còn ở bên Na-Uy hoàn toàn một trời một vực. Na-Uy thì họ có tóc vàng mà dân nó to lớn như Mỹ vậy mà họ lại nói tiếng Na-Uy tức là cái thứ tiếng tạp nạc, trộn các thứ tiếng Anh, tiếng Đức, tiếng Pháp vào trong đó. Tôi vẫn còn nhớ một tí tiếng Na-Uy đó.

**Interviewer:** Khi mới sang đây thì tiếng Pháp của anh ra sao? Anh học ở Việt Nam chưa?

**Interviewee:** Tiếng Pháp hồi đó tôi có học ở Việt Nam nhưng mà tiếng Pháp học ở Việt Nam không có thể sử dụng được. Nó chỉ là cái tiếng Pháp học ở trường



mỗi một tuần mấy tiếng, rồi không có thực hành thành ra chỉ vậy thôi. Dầu sao nó cũng là một cái căn bản, khi tới Pháp này mình học lại thì nó cũng dễ hơn.

**Interviewer:** Như vậy có nghĩa là lúc ban đầu mới sang đây thì anh cũng đỡ cảm thấy lạc long, tại vì anh có gia đình, có bố mẹ ở đây.

**Interviewee:** Vâng.

**Interviewer:** Rồi anh thấy cái khó khăn nhất trong thời gian đầu, để mà tạo một nếp sống mới ở Pháp là gì vậy? Anh có gặp khó khăn gì không?

**Interviewee:** Chắc tại có bố mẹ nên không có gặp khó khăn gì hết. Bố mẹ lo cho hết rồi. Chỉ có cái là hội nhập vô cái xã hội Pháp thì đó là một cái khó khăn đầu tiên. Cuộc sống ở Việt Nam thấy mọi người nhàn hạ lắm, không bao giờ thấy họ chạy đua với thời gian, mà khi qua đây là phải chạy đua với thời gian, chạy đua với metro, với xe buýt. Không phải là tại mình mà cái việc nó cứ như vậy. Tất cả mọi người đều như vậy thành ra mình bị cuốn hút vào cái cuộc sống của họ.

**Interviewer:** Nhưng mà bây giờ thì anh vẫn còn có thể dành thời giờ để sinh hoạt với đoàn thiếu nhi.

**Interviewee:** Tức là cũng phải chạy dừ lắm.

**Interviewer:** Anh có cảm thấy các sinh hoạt với cộng đoàn giáo xứ ở đây có giúp cho đời sống của gia đình mình thăng tiến thêm về vấn đề đức tin hay là về vấn đề văn hóa gì không?

**Interviewee:** Thực sự công nhận đó là có. Mình không phải là mèo khen mèo dài đuôi nhưng mà đó là cái môi trường để cho những người Việt Nam nói chung ở hải ngoại có thể gặp gỡ và giữ được cái truyền thống, tiếng nói của mình.

**Interviewer:** Tôi thấy cháu lớn của anh rất là ngoan, sống theo tinh thần người Việt Nam. Anh có thể cho biết cái kinh nghiệm anh dạy con làm sao về vấn đề bảo tồn ngôn ngữ và văn hóa không?

**Interviewee:** Có lẽ cũng chẳng có cái gì gọi là kinh nghiệm đặc biệt hết. Dầu sao thì cũng lớn nhiều ở Việt Nam. Khi mà đi thì lúc đó khoảng mười tám, hai mươi tuổi thành ra cũng được cái sự giáo dục rất là nhiều, học hết tú tài ở Việt Nam luôn. Thành ra khi mà sống trong gia đình thì vẫn giữ cái nề nếp của Việt Nam. Hồi trước sống với bố mẹ mình làm sao thì bây giờ mình sống với con cái mình như vậy, luôn luôn nói tiếng Việt với nhau thì tự nhiên nó sẽ thành nếp sống thôi.

**Interviewer:** Như vậy là ở nhà các cháu nói tiếng Việt với bố mẹ?

**Interviewee:** Càng ngày tụi nó có khuynh hướng nói tiếng Pháp nhiều hơn là tiếng Việt nhưng mà mình cố gắng nói tiếng Việt với tụi nó. Khi nào tụi nó không hiểu thì mình giải thích bằng tiếng Pháp.

**Interviewer:** Vậy khi chúng nó nói chuyện với nhau thì nói bằng tiếng Pháp à?

**Interviewee:** Vâng, bằng tiếng Pháp, nhất là hai đứa bé với nhau. Nhưng mà anh lớn với hai đứa em thì lại nói bằng tiếng Việt.

**Interviewer:** Đó là cái khó khăn đối với các em sau này. Cái vấn đề chúng nó nói chuyện với nhau bằng tiếng Pháp, Sơ nghĩ không phải là một trở ngại lớn nhưng làm sao cho các em có khả năng sử dụng tiếng Việt khi cần thiết để nói chuyện với những người lớn tuổi, hoặc là trong cái khung cảnh của người Việt.

**Interviewee:** Nhưng mà đó là một con dao hai lưỡi, tại vì lấy kinh nghiệm của con trai lớn của em là Hiếu, thì hồi trước chỉ có một mình nó thôi thì ở nhà nói chuyện bằng tiếng Việt với nhau. Mà cháu thì lại ở Việt Nam qua, bởi vậy cái tiếng Pháp của cháu rất là kém, nó không được thực hành ở nhà. Có một đạo thầy giáo cũng gọi lên hỏi là vous ở nhà nói chuyện với nhau bằng tiếng Pháp hay tiếng Việt, thì tôi nói là chúng tôi phải duy trì tiếng mẹ đẻ của chúng tôi nên chúng tôi nói chuyện bằng tiếng Việt. Thì ông thầy mới nói là không có được vì như vậy làm tiếng Pháp của nó chậm đi, không có thể nào nó tiến được. Nhưng mà từ trước tới giờ em cũng luôn luôn có ý nghĩ là cái tiếng Pháp dù sao nó cũng sử dụng nhiều hơn là cái tiếng Việt vì tiếng Việt chỉ sử dụng có mấy tiếng ở nhà với ba mẹ thôi. Thành ra ở nhà vẫn cứ nói tiếng Việt và nó là con dao hai lưỡi là như vậy. Quả thực là cái tiếng Pháp nếu mình không thường xuyên sử dụng ở nhà thì tụi nó sẽ có ảnh hưởng. Nhưng mà mình phải chọn một trong hai. Bây giờ thì hai cô bé nhỏ của em cho dù tụi nó nói chuyện bằng tiếng Pháp đi nhưng mà lâu lâu cũng bắt nó nói chuyện bằng tiếng Việt.

**Interviewer:** Lập trường của anh như vậy là đúng đó, chứ đừng có dạy con mình bằng cách theo con mà nói tiếng Pháp thì mình mất luôn tiếng Việt. Lúc này anh có nói là anh sống trong xã hội Pháp mà anh còn vẫn giữ cái thuần túy của người Việt Nam là điều tốt. Quan điểm của anh như thế nào để cho một gia đình Việt Nam thành công ở đây thì họ có cần hội nhập hoàn toàn vào xã hội Pháp hay không? thí dụ như về vấn đề phong tục tập quán của người ta, về vấn đề tiếng nói, rồi cả cách sống nữa? Anh có quan điểm

như thế nào? Thí dụ như có người quan điểm là phải sống như Tây thì mình mới thành công được.

**Interviewee:** Mình phải phân biệt hai cái, một cái hội nhập và một cái đồng hóa. Mình hội nhập vào môi trường họ để mình sống chứ mình không đồng hóa với họ. Họ có những điểm hay thì mình theo họ sống nhưng mà mình không có đồng hóa với tất cả những phong tục tập quán của họ. Đó không hẳn là đã đúng.

**Interviewer:** Đúng rồi. Đại khái là không có thể nào để cho người ta đồng hóa mình. Anh có bao giờ cảm thấy trong đời sống khi đi làm, người ta có đối xử với mình khác hoặc là cảm thấy mình bị thiệt thòi bởi vì mình là người Việt Nam, trong khung cảnh làm việc của xã hội Pháp hay không?

**Interviewee:** Trong cái khung cảnh làm việc thì cũng là trường hợp đặc biệt nữa vì là chủ không hẳn là Pháp. Gốc của họ là Ý nhưng mà họ sinh trưởng và sống ở bên này. Tức là cha mẹ thì nói được tiếng Ý nhưng mà con cái họ thì hoàn toàn không nói được tiếng Ý. Đó là một trường hợp điển hình cho những gia đình Việt Nam ở đây. Con cái của họ bây giờ thì hoàn toàn là Tây, bởi vậy họ đối với mình thì cũng quý mình lắm tại vì không có nói về vấn đề chủng tộc tại vì họ cũng không có hẳn là người Pháp nữa. Trong công việc của tôi là rửa hình, chụp hình chuyên nghiệp cho các công sở này kia thì em chịu trách nhiệm về mặt kỹ thuật, thành ra họ cũng trọng mình lắm. Thấy rõ ràng là mình có cái thiệt thòi trong vấn đề mình chưa có nắm hoàn toàn cái ngôn ngữ của họ. Cái thứ hai là vấn đề chủng tộc, trên vấn đề kỹ thuật thì giữa mình và người Tây khác thì tay nghề ngang nhau, nhưng mà họ chọn một người để làm vet-măng-xap thì họ vẫn chọn Tây hơn là Việt.

**Interviewer:** Bây giờ anh có “cong-sap” về cái lãnh vực vấn đề kỹ thuật không?

**Interviewee:** Nói vet-măng-sap thì ghê gớm lắm. Trong hãng chỉ có hai người thôi mà hai người này là hai người Việt Nam với nhau. Họ quý mình là vì mình làm việc đàng hoàng, chăm chỉ nên họ thích vậy thôi.

**Interviewer:** Làm cái nghề đó thì anh có phải học một cái bằng cấp gì đặc biệt không?

**Interviewee:** Lúc đầu qua, năm 1981 thì có đi học ở cái trường dạy toàn tiếng Pháp thôi dành cho những người tị nạn Việt Nam mới qua. Sau đó thì mới chuyển qua cái trình độ hơi hơi cao hơn chút xíu trong một cái trường hoàn toàn của người Tây. Chính cái bà hiệu trưởng của trường đó rất là thương những người tị nạn. Họ đã dắt những người tị nạn đi tìm những chỗ nào

mà họ cần việc để xin việc. Lúc đó họ dặt nguyên cả một lớp như vậy là mười mấy người tới cái lo-bo-ra-toa này để mà thi vô, thì chỉ có hai người được là một cái anh chàng kia và em. Họ former cho mình sáu tháng sau đó vô làm luôn. Em làm từ đó cho tới giờ.

**Interviewer:** Vậy là cái điều kiện làm việc tương đối anh cũng thấy thoải mái chứ?

**Interviewee:** Dạ không có thấy gì là khó khăn hết. Em cũng may mắn được Chúa thương.

**Interviewer:** Theo anh thì anh có khuyên giới trẻ Việt Nam qua sống bên Pháp này không?

**Interviewee:** Có hai vấn đề, có và không. Nếu mà cái người đó đi mà muốn tiến thân trên con đường học vấn thì không nên qua Pháp, tại vì cái hệ thống giáo dục của Pháp rất là cổ điển và nó trì trệ con người lại. Thử so sánh giáo dục của Pháp và giáo dục của Mỹ thì Mỹ họ rất là nhiều nhân tài mà họ học không có cái lối dìm dìm lại là phải thi lớp này lớp kia nhưng mà họ lấy những cái chuyên khoa, họ cứ lên lên như vậy. Ai cũng kỹ sư, bác sĩ đầy ra thành ra họ tiến thân rất là dễ. Nếu mà cái người nào mà muốn xuất ngoại để tiến thân trong con đường học vấn thì nên qua Mỹ hơn. Còn nếu chọn một đời sống khả dĩ, cũng không đến nỗi là ghê gớm lắm và an ninh hơn bên Mỹ hoặc là nhàn hạ cái vấn đề bảo đảm xã hội hơn thì nên vào Pháp.

**Interviewer:** Anh mua nhà chưa?

**Interviewee:** Dạ có mua rồi.

**Interviewer:** Có nhiều người nói với tôi là một trong những cái khó sống ở bên Pháp là vấn đề nhà cửa chật chội, anh có cảm thấy như vậy không?

**Interviewee:** Dĩ nhiên. Nó chật chội tại vì cái khả năng tài chính của mỗi người thôi. Nếu mà có tiền thì mình ở nhà cao cửa rộng còn nếu không có tiền mình ở trong cái lồng chim, thì đó cũng là cái nhà.

**Interviewer:** Trong gia đình của anh thì anh có cơ hội tốt, là vì anh có ba mẹ và chị em ở đây trước. Vậy gia đình của anh có sống theo phong tục tập quán của người Việt Nam nhiều không?

**Interviewee:** Gần như là hoàn toàn theo cái phong tục tập quán Việt Nam thôi.

**Interviewer:** Anh có nghĩ là một người không biết nói tiếng Việt thì có thể coi cái người đó hoàn toàn là người Việt Nam không? Thí dụ như ra ngoài đường mình thấy anh chàng đó có bố mẹ Việt Nam nhưng mà sang đây chẳng nói

được câu tiếng Việt nào hết, mà cũng chẳng biết gì về văn hóa Việt Nam hết, vậy thì anh có nghĩ rằng người đó là người Việt Nam không?

**Interviewee:** Mình nghĩ cái gốc của họ là người Việt Nam chứ họ không phải là người Việt Nam. Người Việt Nam là phải biết cái ngôn ngữ và văn hóa Việt Nam.

**Interviewer:** Anh có thể cho biết một vài cái kinh nghiệm về sự khó khăn trong nếp sống của một gia đình Việt Nam sống trong xã hội Pháp không? Tức là về sự xung khắc giữa người già và người trẻ, hoặc là giữa bố mẹ và con cái mà anh đã nhận thấy, được không?

**Interviewee:** Cái xung khắc đó không chỉ có ở Pháp mà ngay cả ở nước Việt Nam mình vẫn có. Giữa hai cái thế hệ thì khó mà có sự thông cảm được. Ở Việt Nam, cái sự xung khắc đó có thể ngấm ngấm tại vì cái hệ thống giáo dục ở Việt Nam là từ trên ông bà bố mẹ trên cao trở xuống. Bố nói thì con nghe, chồng nói thì vợ nghe, không được có ý kiến gì hết. Nhưng còn cái giáo dục bên này thì nó tự do hơn, có thể có ý kiến vì vậy con cái với bố mẹ mà có xung khắc thì nó bùng nổ ngay lập tức và có thể dễ đi tới cái sự đổ vỡ ngay lập tức tại vì nó phát biểu ý kiến liền.

**Interviewer:** Nhưng mà anh có nghĩ rằng bởi vì giới trẻ ở đây sống trong một môi trường văn hóa và quan điểm sống rất khác với bố mẹ và những người lớn tuổi ở Việt Nam sang đây, cho nên gặp rất nhiều khó khăn, và sự xung đột xảy ra càng ngày càng nhiều, phải không?

**Interviewee:** Vâng, càng ngày càng nhiều. Đó là cái lý do của nhiều sự đổ vỡ ở trong gia đình mà bố mẹ thì lớn tuổi còn con cái thì quá trẻ lại được sự giáo dục bên này nhiều và ở trong gia đình không có giữ cái tiếng nói, truyền thống, phong tục Việt Nam thành ra các em nó nghĩ là tất cả những gì của Việt Nam đều là xấu hết và nó theo Tây hoàn toàn. Mà khi đã theo Tây thì nó sẽ không chấp nhận cái ý tưởng của bố mẹ và đổ vỡ ngay. Cả chính các cặp vợ chồng cũng vậy nữa. Nếu mà hai người không đồng ý nhất quyết với nhau ở một cái điểm nào đó thì thế nào cũng có sự đổ vỡ, nhất là một người thì thích bảo thủ, một người lại thích tự do.

**Interviewer:** Theo anh thì anh phải giáo dục con anh làm sao để mà tránh được những khó khăn đó?

**Interviewee:** Đây là một câu hỏi lớn tại vì cho dù là tụi em không già lắm nhưng mà đối với tụi nó thì bắt đầu thấy hai cái thế hệ rất là khác. Với Hiếu, con trai lớn của em thì bây giờ nó cũng đã lớn cho nên ít nói chuyện với nó và nhiều

khi mình cũng cảm thấy là cho dù thấy chương tai gai mắt thì cũng phải nhin nó rồi từ từ mình giáo dục nó một cách nào đó tại vì cũng khổ tâm cho tụi nhỏ khi mà tụi nó đứng giữa hai nền giáo dục cổ và tân. Mình ở giữa thì mình phải làm sao dung hòa được hai cái đó chứ nếu không thì không được.

**Interviewer:** Có bao giờ nó nói là thầy cô ở trường dạy nó thế này mà bố mẹ dạy nó như vậy là không có đúng không?

**Interviewee:** Hiếu thì không có nói như vậy nhưng mà đứa thứ hai là Thảo thì có nói là ở trường nói là bố mẹ không được đánh con cái. Nhưng mà cái sửa trị đó là một cái để mà uốn nắn con trẻ. Mình không thể nào mà để cho nó muốn làm gì thì làm. Dĩ nhiên mình phải yêu thương nó và các cụ mình cũng có nói là yêu thì phải cho voi cho rọt. Tây bây giờ nó cũng đang bàn luận cái vấn đề là ba mẹ có nên đánh để mà sửa trị con cái hay không. Họ đang chờ cái đạo luật mới đó.

**Interviewer:** Xin anh nói qua một chút về các sinh hoạt của anh với cộng đồng giáo xứ ở đây. Anh sinh hoạt với giáo xứ lâu chưa?

**Interviewee:** Từ năm 1981 hay là 1982 gì đó. Tới đây khoảng hai năm sau là gia nhập rồi.

**Interviewer:** Ở Việt Nam anh có sinh hoạt trong thiếu nhi chưa?

**Interviewee:** Trong thiếu nhi một tí và trong hướng đạo một tí. Hồi ở Việt Nam thì cái gì cũng thử ă.

**Interviewer:** Hiện giờ thì các em thiếu nhi có khoảng chừng bao nhiêu anh H?

**Interviewee:** Hồi năm ngoái thì khoảng 220 em nhưng mà năm nay thì hồi tuần trước ghi tên chỉ khoảng 120 tới 150 em hà. Tức là vẫn còn thiếu.

**Interviewer:** Các em sinh hoạt từ ba giờ tới mấy giờ mới xong anh?

**Interviewee:** Tới bảy giờ. Đại đa số thì sinh hoạt tới khi sau thánh lễ, một thiểu số rất ít thì ra về trước giờ lễ tại vì bố mẹ bận hay là tại ngày hôm sau phải đi lễ chỗ này chỗ kia.

**Interviewer:** Chương trình sinh hoạt thì như thế nào vậy?

**Interviewee:** Từ ba giờ tới bốn giờ thì các em học tiếng Việt, bốn giờ tới năm giờ là sinh hoạt theo phong trào thiếu nhi thánh thể và năm giờ tới sáu giờ là học giáo lý, sáu giờ tới bảy giờ là thánh lễ.

**Interviewer:** Tôi có gặp gia đình chị kia không có đạo mà lần đầu tiên đưa con tới ghi danh, mình có khuyến khích cho những người đó đem con tới sinh hoạt với mình không?

**Interviewee:** Ở đây có mấy trường hợp của mấy gia đình và những gia đình đó gia nhập từ hai năm trước, sau cho con em được rửa tội. Có thể là có sự khuyến khích hoặc là nói chuyện giữa hàng xóm, họ hàng gì. Khi mà họ thấy như vậy thì họ tự tới chứ cũng chẳng có ai tới gõ cửa mà kêu “ô, vô đây, vô đây”. Đầu tiên thì họ muốn cho con em vô học tiếng Việt thôi, sau đó thì họ thấy các sinh hoạt hay hay thì họ cũng cho con em gia nhập và cuối cùng thì cũng trở lại đạo.

**Interviewer:** Các lớp tiếng Việt ở đây được chia ra làm mấy cấp vậy anh H?

**Interviewee:** Rất là nhiều. Theo phong trào thiếu nhi thánh thể thì chia ra làm từng lứa tuổi là Ấu, Thiếu và Nghĩa. Ấu thì từ bảy tới chín tuổi, Thiếu thì từ chín tới mười hai tuổi còn Nghĩa Sĩ thì từ mười ba tới mười sáu tuổi. Trong mỗi một ngành như vậy lại chia ra thành từng lớp theo các trình độ khác nhau. Các cô thầy ở đây hoàn toàn là thiện nguyện hết.

**Interviewer:** Các tài liệu thì mình tự soạn ra hay sao?

**Interviewee:** Tài liệu thì những năm đầu tiên thì phải tự soạn lấy, nhưng mà những năm sau này thì có tài liệu từ bên Mỹ tới hoặc là tài liệu gộp nhặt đây đó và làm ra. Tài liệu sinh hoạt phong trào thì lấy ở bên Mỹ vì bên Mỹ cũng lấy ra từ Việt Nam rồi sửa đổi cho nó thích hợp với môi trường bên ngoài. Còn Việt ngữ thì cũng lấy những sách vở của tiếng Việt Nam.

**Interviewer:** Các cháu nhà anh thì có sinh hoạt chương trình thiếu nhi và học tiếng Việt hết phải không?

**Interviewee:** Dạ.

**Interviewer:** Anh thấy mỗi thứ bảy đưa đi đưa về như vậy có cực không?

**Interviewee:** Thấy nó cũng quen hà. Có thể cũng cực nhưng mà nó đã thành cái thói quen rồi.

**Interviewer:** Anh muốn cho con cái sống trong tinh thần của người Việt, nhưng mà sau này thí dụ như là nó muốn lập gia đình với một người thuộc sắc tộc khác thì đối với anh đó có phải là một điều trở ngại không?

**Interviewee:** Cũng tội nghiệp cho đứa bé tại vì mình không thể nào cấm cản được. Tình yêu thì không lứa tuổi và không ngăn cách gì hết. Ở Việt Nam thì cha mẹ hay ép gả nhưng mà đó là cuộc đời của nó mà, mình đâu có sống với tụi nó đời đời được đâu, vì vậy phải để cho tụi nó quyết định, nhưng mà mình phải hướng dẫn nó. Nếu mà nó lấy một người chủng tộc khác thì nó sẽ tách ra khỏi cộng đồng Việt Nam bởi vì cái người bạn đường của nó. Nó muốn giữ hạnh phúc gia đình thì nó cũng phải dung hòa hai bên, thì hoặc

là nó sẽ bỏ bên này, hoặc là nó sẽ bỏ bên kia. Mình phải nói cho nó biết về những cái đó và mình nói cho nó biết là nếu mà nó có đủ nghị lực và can đảm để mà dạy dỗ con em nó theo cái phong tục tập quán Việt Nam để mà duy trì truyền thống văn hóa Việt Nam thì cứ việc. Cá nhân tôi thì dĩ nhiên mà muốn nó lập gia đình với người Việt Nam hơn tại vì ở đây cho dù mình nói tiếng của họ nhưng mà có những cái phong tục tập quán của họ mình không thể nào theo được.

**Interviewer:** Có bao giờ anh nghĩ tới việc trở lại Việt Nam để sống không? Anh có về Việt Nam bao giờ chưa?

**Interviewee:** Chưa bao giờ, đâu có được quyền vì tôi chưa có quyền công dân Pháp tại vì không xin. Xin cũng vậy mà không xin cũng vậy thôi. Xin thì mình trở thành Tây giấy, cuối cùng vẫn là người Việt Nam. Tuy nhiên nếu mình muốn con cái sau này sinh hoạt ở đây không có thiệt thòi như mình thì nên có quốc tịch Tây.

**Interviewer:** Nhưng con cái anh sinh ra ở đây thì mang quốc tịch Pháp phải không?

**Interviewee:** Đúng nhưng mà nó đổi hoài à. Con cái thì mang quốc tịch của cha mẹ. Gia đình tôi thì chưa có ai mang quốc tịch Pháp hết. Tuy nhiên đó không phải là cái ưu tư của tôi hiện giờ.

**Interviewer:** Vậy anh có nghĩ là một ngày kia mình sẽ về Việt Nam sống không?

**Interviewee:** Về Việt Nam sống thì chắc là không đâu, chắc chỉ về chơi thôi vì dầu sao đã có bao nhiêu năm sống trên đất Pháp này. Cái môi trường sống và điều kiện vệ sinh nó đã như vậy rồi nên nếu mà đem con cái về đó sống thì chắc là rất là khó. Con cái thì sẽ rất khó thích nghi được còn mình thì cũng khó mà thay đổi từ cái lễ giáo Âu Phương sang cái nếp sống của Việt Nam. Mình cũng thấy nó hơi ngỡ ngàng một chút xiu. Chắc là khó có thể.

**Interviewer:** Anh có ba mẹ ở đây thì có khi nào các cụ cảm thấy buồn không?

**Interviewee:** Khổ cho những người già vì những người già thì khó lòng mà thích hợp với môi trường người Pháp, cái thứ nhất là khí hậu, cái thứ hai là tiếng nói. Bà cụ tiếng Pháp không biết nhiều, ra ngoài đường thì nói với ai mà cũng không dám đi ra ngoài nữa. Có nhiều gia đình cũng bảo lãnh cha mẹ sang đây ở luôn nhưng mà chỉ sau hai tháng thì nằng nặc đòi về Việt Nam vì buồn quá, đa số chỉ ở nhà một mình với con với cháu mà chúng nó thì cũng đi làm hết, cuối tuần nó mới có giờ rảnh chở lên giáo xứ một tí hoặc là đi chợ Tàu một tí. Rất là buồn và cô đơn.

**Interviewer:** Hai ông bà bây giờ ở riêng hay sao?



**Interviewee:** Dạ ở riêng.

**Interviewer:** Các cụ bao nhiêu tuổi rồi?

**Interviewee:** Cũng ngoài sáu mươi lăm. Các cụ sống ở đây từ năm 1974 nhưng mà cũng không thích hợp lắm. Hồi trước ba mẹ làm ở bộ ngoại giao thành ra cũng làm ở nước ngoài rồi, khi mà mất nước thì di cư sang đây tị nạn. Con cái ở bên này thì nên ráng có khả năng mà lo cho các cụ, sống ở Việt Nam thì các cụ thoải mái và sung sướng hơn là sang đây.

**Interviewer:** Ba má anh có nghĩ tới vấn đề về Việt Nam về hưu không?

**Interviewee:** Vấn đề sức khỏe là một. Về đó thì làm sao mà hệ thống y tế bên đó mà lo cho được. Cái thứ hai là con cái ở hết bên này, bây giờ về bên kia thì cũng buồn.

**Interviewer:** Tất cả các câu hỏi thì tôi đã hỏi xong. Anh H còn có những tư tưởng gì anh muốn góp ý kiến thêm cho tôi trong dự án nghiên cứu này không? Dự án nghiên cứu của tôi là adaptation của người Việt Nam trong xã hội Tây Phương, điển hình là ở Pháp và ở Úc trong cái vấn đề bảo tồn ngôn ngữ và văn hóa.

**Interviewee:** Cái đó thì cũng tùy vào cái khả năng thích ứng của mỗi một người. Có người có thể thích ứng vào bất kỳ môi trường nào cho dù họ không biết tiếng nói của môi trường đó. Tuy nhiên nếu họ biết sử dụng ngôn ngữ của xã hội đó càng nhiều thì càng dễ dàng hơn để mà gia nhập vào xã hội đó. Cái nữa là tùy theo họ có sự nâng đỡ của gia đình và bạn bè ở trong cái nước mà họ tới hay không. Nếu tới một mình thì có thể rất là khó, bị mất hẳn một cái lẽ lối gì đó trong cuộc sống khiến cho cuộc sống không có ý nghĩa, buồn và không có ai nâng đỡ tinh thần. Họ không có adapt nổi, một số thì đi làm đường lạc lối còn một số thì thấy bơ vơ lạc lõng.

**Interviewer:** Chị sang đây thì có đi làm không?

**Interviewee:** Không, chỉ ở nhà thôi.

**Interviewer:** Vậy chị có cảm thấy thoải mái khi sống như vậy không?

**Interviewee:** Trong khung cảnh gia đình thì thoải mái nhưng mà ra đường thì vẫn e dè, ít tiếp xúc với người khác, đa số thì ở nhà lo cho con cái.

**Interviewer:** Bạn bè của anh thì có nhiều người sắc tộc khác không hay đa số là người Việt Nam?

**Interviewee:** Gặp thì nói chuyện thôi chứ nói là bạn thì vẫn là người Việt Nam. Trong khung cảnh Việt Nam thì vẫn cảm thấy thông cảm dễ dàng hơn. Chắc tại

tiếng Pháp của mình không thể nào nói cho họ biết hết tất cả những gì mình nghĩ, cũng không thể hiểu hết ý nghĩa mà họ muốn nói.

**Interviewer:** Còn vấn đề ăn uống thì sao?

**Interviewee:** Vẫn là ăn cơm Việt Nam. Đứa con trai lớn vẫn thích ăn cơm Việt Nam hơn là đồ Tây. Bữa nào mà không có cơm là buồn lắm.

**Interviewer:** Vậy thôi, cảm ơn anh H nhiều nha. Như vậy là xong rồi đó. Cảm ơn anh thật nhiều.

## Oral Memoir Interview No 22

### Female, University Student

- Interviewer: Chào N, sơ đọc trong bản trả lời của em là em sinh năm 1980, thì năm nay em bao nhiêu tuổi rồi?
- Interviewee: Dạ 23 sơ.
- Interviewer: Gia đình em tới Úc năm 1981, như vậy lúc đó em mới 1 tuổi thôi.
- Interviewee: Dạ không, ba em vượt biên khi em mới được 3 tháng cho tới năm 1989 thì mẹ và em mới qua đây.
- Interviewer: Như vậy khi em qua đây em bao nhiêu tuổi?
- Interviewee: Dạ khoảng chừng 8 tuổi
- Interviewer: Lúc ở Việt nam em đã bắt đầu đi học chưa vậy?
- Interviewee: Dạ em học hết lớp 2 rồi mới bắt đầu sang Úc.
- Interviewer: Em còn nhớ khi em mới qua Úc thì cảm nghiệm đầu tiên của em như thế nào không?
- Interviewee: Dạ, em thấy gì cũng mới lạ đặc biệt khi tiếp xúc với người Úc, lúc đó em còn nhỏ quá không có kinh nghiệm như người lớn, đối với em thì thời gian qua đây thì tiếp xúc với môi trường học đường là tiểu học thì có nhiều ấn tượng.
- Interviewer: Lúc đó em vô trường tiểu học ngay hay đi học tiếng Anh hay là sao?
- Interviewee: Đối với người lớn thì họ phải học ở trường tiếng Anh, vì em còn nhỏ nên có thể vào thẳng trường tiểu học.
- Interviewer: Mà lúc đó em có nói tiếng Anh được không?
- Interviewee: Dạ, không chỉ biết đếm với lại chào hỏi thôi rồi sau đó, là vì lúc qua đây em học trường R G Primary lúc đó là thầy T dạy tiếng việt ở đó, thì thỉnh thoảng thầy cũng giúp đỡ về ngôn ngữ, các bạn người Việt giúp rồi nghe qua nghe lại từ từ cũng quen
- Interviewer: Ngay lúc đầu em có học tiếng Việt không?
- Interviewee: Dạ không sơ, cho tới năm lớp 12 em học ở trường St Mary.

- Interviewer: Làm sao em nói tiếng Việt được, em chỉ học hồi ở Việt nam thôi hả?
- Interviewee: Hồi đó em học lớp 10 thì có học tiếng Việt, em chỉ học một term ngắn thôi với thầy H, em học ở trường T. M, thời gian đó em học cho biết vậy thôi chứ cũng có lúc đi lúc không, mãi cho đến lớp 12 thì em mới thực sự học tiếng Việt.
- Interviewer: Vậy làm sao em theo kịp lớp 12, sơ nhớ lúc đó em học cũng khá lắm mà, hình như em được full mark phải không? Em có lãnh thưởng của trường St Mary phải không? còn đi thi lớp 12 có được thưởng không?
- Interviewee: Lúc đó em được 19,5 điểm, em có lãnh thưởng giải nhất của St Mary nhưng không được thưởng matricualtion vì phải đúng 20 điểm. Lúc đó em mới học lớp 11 thôi, còn tiếng Việt em học lớp 12.
- Interviewer: Em sang lúc 8 tuổi mà không đi học tiếng Việt, làm sao em viết tiếng Việt được, em học ở đâu?
- Interviewee: Thứ nhất là coi phim tàu sớ, thứ hai là nhà ba mẹ cũng nói tiếng Việt, em sinh hoạt hướng đạo cũng nói tiếng Việt, và em cũng yêu ngôn ngữ mẹ đẻ thành ra khi sang đây em đi ra thư viện ở Salisbury, họ có cho mượn sách Việt nam, đa số là tiểu thuyết Quỳnh Dao.
- Interviewer: Như vậy là em học tiếng Việt qua sách vở, rồi em có học viết không? Đại khái là trước khi em học ở St Mary.
- Interviewee: Dạ có sơ, em thường hay viết nhật ký bằng tiếng Việt ngay từ nhỏ khi em còn học tiểu học, và cứ một tuần là em đọc hai hay ba cuốn tiểu thuyết như vậy, thức đêm đọc truyện chường.
- Interviewer: Như vậy là em phát triển tiếng Việt qua đọc sách, viết nhật ký.
- Interviewee: Mãi cho tới lớp 12 và đại học thì em mới học những tác phẩm như là Anh Phải Sống, Đoạn Tuyệt của Nhất Linh, mà hồi đó em học tiểu học em đã đọc hết những cuốn sách đó rồi.
- Interviewer: Tức là em học ở Việt nam hả?

- Interviewee: Dạ không khi qua đây em tự đi tìm đọc, và em cũng trau dồi qua các bác lớn tuổi hơn, em cũng yêu thơ văn, em thường hay đọc thơ, đọc văn, cứ đến tết hay tết trung thu thì em tham gia vào các giải thưởng thi văn thơ sáng tác, thì cứ mỗi lần em đi dự thi thì nhờ những chú bác dò cho em.
- Interviewer: Rồi em cũng có tiếp tục học tiếng Việt ở đại học Adelaide phải không?
- Interviewee: Dạ có sơ, vì khi em học trung học, em có nghe thi tiếng Việt lớp 12 để lấy điểm vô đại học thì em rất là mừng, bởi vì em yêu ngôn ngữ Việt lắm thành thử ra em chọn ngay môn tiếng Việt để thi vào Đại học.
- Interviewer: Em học ở đại học được mấy năm rồi?
- Interviewee: Em học 3 năm ở đại học, hết level 2, 3 và pass.
- Interviewer: Hình như em cũng được phần thưởng trên đại học phải không?
- Interviewee: Em được phần thưởng 2 năm liền là level 3 và pass.
- Interviewer: Trong tương lai em có nghĩ sẽ sử dụng tiếng Việt trong ngành nghề của em không?
- Interviewee: Có, sơ, chắc chắn là hiện giờ em đang học luật và cộng đồng Việt nam ở Nam úc phát triển rất là lớn, cho nên em nghĩ tương lai khi em làm sẽ có nhiều cơ hội tiếp xúc với khách hàng, thì sẽ có nhiều người Việt nam, có thể nói tiếng Việt với họ để họ hiểu về vấn đề luật pháp thì em nghĩ khả năng của em hiểu được ngôn ngữ sẽ giúp em rất là nhiều.
- Interviewer: Còn văn hóa Việt nam thì em học ở đâu? em hiểu văn hóa và sống theo văn hóa người Việt là do em học từ gia đình, hay tại trường học qua sách vở.
- Interviewee: Cả 3 sơ, thứ nhất là từ gia đình, thứ hai là sách vở và báo chí và nhất là em học hỏi từ cộng đồng người Việt. Em tham gia vào sinh hoạt sinh viên, hướng đạo, qua cộng đồng Thiên Chúa Giáo tại Pooraka.
- Interviewer: Em có vô đoàn thể nào của cộng đồng ở Pooraka không?

- Interviewee: Hồi còn nhỏ thì em có tham gia thiếu nhi, khi em lên trung học thì thôi.
- Interviewer: Bây giờ em có còn tham gia trong hội sinh viên học sinh không?
- Interviewee: Dạ không sợ, bây giờ cũng gần năm cuối rồi nên bận rộn nên em không tham gia bên sinh viên nữa, nhưng bên cộng đồng thì bất cứ ở lứa tuổi nào em cũng tích cực.
- Interviewer: Bây giờ em làm gì trong ban chấp hành của cộng đồng người Việt?
- Interviewee: Em nắm vai trò ủy viên thanh niên trong cộng đồng người Việt.
- Interviewer: Em có gặp gỡ thanh niên nhiều không?
- Interviewee: Em cũng vừa nắm vai trò đó khoảng từ tháng 7 hay tháng 8 năm nay thôi sợ, trong vòng nửa năm nay em cũng bận thi cử, nên chưa có cơ hội bắt đầu gặp gỡ thanh niên, mà có lẽ cuối năm nay cho tới đầu năm tới, trong dịp tết nguyên đán em sẽ bắt đầu, rảnh rồi sẽ kéo các bạn trẻ tham gia sinh hoạt.
- Interviewer: Lúc này em nói là em rất thích thơ văn, hình như em cũng có sở thích về kịch nghệ nữa phải không?
- Interviewee: Dạ 1 hay 2 năm trước em có tham gia bên sinh viên, thì em rất là thích âm nhạc và văn nghệ thành ra em thường hay khởi xướng những chương trình văn nghệ gây quỹ từ thiện cho các em mồ côi, rồi mỗi lần thi áo dài, tết nguyên đán hay trung thu thì em cũng khuyến khích các em nhỏ hát.
- Interviewer: Mà em có thi áo dài bao giờ không?
- Interviewee: Có sợ, mà chắc em đoạt giải thí sinh can đảm, năm 2000 thì em có dự thi nhưng trượt, nhưng năm 2001 thì em trở thành trưởng ban tổ chức thi áo dài.
- Interviewer: Còn năm nay thì em có dự tính sẽ tham gia tiết mục nào trong hội chợ tết của mình không?
- Interviewee: Tết trung thu năm nay thì em là trưởng ban tổ chức cho thi áo dài thiếu nhi, còn năm tới thì em chưa rõ vì cộng đồng chưa liên lạc thành ra cũng chưa biết sẽ tổ chức ở đâu.

- Interviewer: Tức là em cũng phải giúp trong chương trình văn nghệ và sơ nghĩ là thi áo dài, ngày xưa sơ cũng phải chịu trách nhiệm thi áo dài. Trở lại với câu hỏi về cảm nghiệm của em khi em học tiểu học ở đây, như thế nào ? em có thể cho sơ một thí dụ cụ thể về kinh nghiệm học tiểu học của em được không?
- Interviewee: Em nhận thấy những bạn học người Việt lại không đối xử tốt bằng những đứa Úc, nó thấy mình lạ hay nó thấy hoàn cảnh tội nghiệp của mình thì nó hay chơi với mình lắm. Vì vậy em chơi với học sinh Úc, và tiếng Anh của em mới khá lên, còn thầy cô thì quan tâm đến những học sinh mới qua đây không biết tiếng Anh, họ thông cảm, họ hiểu tâm lý của mình hơn như khi mình không làm bài được hoặc khi mình buồn thì họ không nhìn mình với con mắt là mình thiếu thông minh mà họ hiểu được là mình gặp khó khăn về ngôn ngữ. Họ cho mình nhiều thời gian hơn và ít la rầy mình hơn. Khi mới sang đây học tiểu học thì nhà trường cũng ưu đãi mình hơn, chẳng hạn khi đi excursion hoặc chi phí đi đâu chơi thì mình cũng đóng rẻ hơn những đứa Úc.
- Interviewer: Khi em học tiểu học thì em học trường công hết hả? Mà tại sao các bạn Việt nam lại không thích chơi với mình?
- Interviewee: Chắc hồi nhỏ em xấu, vì các bạn gái khi đi học thì mặc áo đầm, tóc thắt bím và tui nó qua trước mình nên tui nó biết tiếng Anh, người Việt mình thì cái gì không biết thì cúi đầu, còn khi biết rồi thì lại không biết thông cảm với người khác, thành ra nó nói là tao không chơi với mày vì mày không biết tiếng Anh.
- Interviewer: Rồi khi em lên trung học thì sao?
- Interviewee: Khi lên trung học thì em vẫn học trường công Paralowiee và hết lớp 10 thì em chuyển qua Norwood High School và từ nhỏ đến lớn em không có bạn người Việt, khi lên trung học thì em chơi với bạn Tàu, Nga, ý, chứ không có bạn người Việt, khi lên trường Norwood thì có rất nhiều người Việt và khi em lên đó thì em mới biết trường việt ngữ St Mary, thì em cũng biết vài bạn

Việt nam nhưng cũng chỉ ở trong học đường mà thôi. Rồi 1 buổi chiều thứ sáu em thấy các bạn đi chung với nhau, em mới hỏi các bạn đi đâu vậy, họ nói đi học tiếng Việt ở St Mary, em hỏi cho em đi với có được không, khi em bắt đầu học ở St Mary em mới có bạn người Việt, và lúc đó rất là vui vì vừa tới đó em được bầu làm lớp trưởng.

Interviewer: Như vậy có nghĩa là học tiếng Việt làm cho em tự tin hơn, cũng như tạo cơ hội cho em gần gũi với bạn người Việt.

Interviewee: Nhất là trên đại học em cảm thấy học tiếng Việt không phải mình chỉ biết về văn hóa và ngôn ngữ Việt, mà còn giúp mình về Anh văn nữa, vì khi em học lớp 12 ở St Mary cũng có nhiều bài văn mà em học cô H, có những bài cô hỏi mình bằng cả hai ngôn ngữ thì mình phải dịch sang tiếng Anh, mình mới biết văn phạm mình còn yếu ở chỗ nào, rồi khi lên đại học thì học hai buổi: văn và ngôn ngữ. Buổi học văn thì mình trau dồi kiến thức về văn chương, còn ngữ pháp thì mình có thể học thêm Anh văn, cách cấu trúc của hai ngôn ngữ.

Interviewer: Nguyên vọng trong tương lai của em như thế nào? Về gia đình theo em thì mình có nên hay phải lập gia đình với người cùng ngôn ngữ, cùng văn hóa với mình không? hay em nghĩ điều đó không thành vấn đề?

Interviewee: Em nghĩ về tình cảm thì không phân biệt về chủng tộc, ngôn ngữ hay tuổi tác, tuy nhiên nếu mình có thể lấy được một người cùng văn hóa cùng ngôn ngữ với mình thì mình tốt hơn vì dễ thông cảm với nhau hơn.

Interviewer: Còn ba má có nghĩ là mình nên lập gia đình với người Việt không? Em có bao giờ bàn với ba má không?

Interviewee: Dĩ nhiên là ba má khuyến khích lấy người Việt hơn rồi, thỉnh thoảng ba chọc là đưa lấy Tàu, đưa lấy Nhật để lâu lâu ba đi holiday.



- Interviewer: Ngày xưa ba em đi trước rồi mới bảo lãnh mẹ với các em qua phải không? Như vậy là ba sang trước còn má và mọi người vẫn tiếp tục ở Việt nam.
- Interviewee: Dạ ba và chị Trinh qua trước.
- Interviewer: Còn nguyện vọng của em cho tương lai thì em có nghĩ gì không?
- Interviewee: Về tương lai thì sau khi tốt nghiệp về luật thì em học thêm về tâm lý còn bây giờ thì em đang ghi danh ở khóa thông dịch năm tới, tại trường... mà họ nghi ngờ về khả năng ngôn ngữ Việt của em nên sắp sửa em phải có cái entry test.
- Interviewer: Lý do tại sao em phải ghi danh học về thông dịch vậy?
- Interviewee: Vì em thích ngôn ngữ Việt, thành ra khi trở thành luật sư rồi thì em thích giúp đỡ người Việt nhiều hơn, em nghĩ là nếu em trở thành thông dịch viên em sẽ giúp cho đồng bào của mình, họ có thể dễ dàng access những cái legal rights của họ vì nhiều người gặp khó khăn về ngôn ngữ thành ra họ ngại đi gặp những cố vấn luật pháp, cảnh sát và bệnh viện, chính vì ngôn ngữ đã làm hạn chế những quyền hạn mà họ có được, thứ nhất là em thích học thêm tiếng Việt, trau dồi thêm Anh văn để giúp cho đồng bào của mình.
- Interviewer: Như vậy thì có cực cho em không vì năm nay là năm cuối của Luật, khi nào thì em ra trường?
- Interviewee: Dạ cuối năm tới.
- Interviewer: Tức là em học double degree phải không?
- Interviewee: Em tốt nghiệp một cái bằng văn khoa rồi, bây giờ em chỉ còn luật thôi sau đó em muốn học thêm tâm lý và em muốn tranh thủ thời gian làm được càng nhiều việc càng tốt.
- Interviewer: Học tâm lý là học thêm một văn bằng khác nữa phải không?
- Interviewee: Là bằng chuyên về tâm lý, đáng lí là tâm lý nằm chung với bằng văn khoa, nhưng nếu em muốn chuyên về tâm lý làm major luôn thì nó trở thành "double degree". Trước khi em học

văn khoa thì em có thể chuyên về tâm lý nhưng em chuyên về ngôn ngữ, bây giờ em trở lại học tâm lý.

Interviewer: Vậy phải học thêm mấy năm nữa?

Interviewee: Dạ bốn năm, còn sống còn học mà sơ, thời đại này không học thì thua sơ ới, vì luật sư ở đây bây giờ thiếu gì thành thử bây giờ mình chỉ hơn người ta ở chỗ là chuyên về nhiều khía cạnh.

Interviewer: Nhưng khi em ra trường mà em không hành nghề luật ngay thì bằng của em còn giá trị không?

Interviewee: Dạ, vẫn còn giá trị sơ.

Interviewer: Tức là sau khi em học xong tâm lý rồi thì em vẫn có thể hành luật, tức là trước khi hành luật thì em phải học qua khóa practical

Interviewee: Dạ, nó kêu là legal practice training.

Interviewer: Mà em đã bắt đầu học chưa?

Interviewee: Dạ tháng 7 năm tới em mới bắt đầu.

Interviewer: Khi nào thì em bắt đầu khóa thông dịch?

Interviewee: Nếu em đậu cái entry test, thì tháng 2 bắt đầu sơ, và em học buổi tối cho tới tháng 12, cái khóa đó gọi là Advanced diploma professional. Vì trước khi mình được vào professional, thì mình phải học cái diploma of interpreting, vì năm tới nó không offer cái khóa học diploma... professional, thành thử ra em phải vào thẳng professional, nên họ làm khó dễ em.

Interviewer: Em có thể sử dụng bằng cấp đại học của em để vào chứ?

Interviewee: Vâng đó là cái mà em hy vọng.

Interviewer: À em đã về Việt nam bao giờ chưa?

Interviewee: Dạ em về hai lần, lần đầu tiên em về làm văn nghệ gây quỹ cho các trẻ em ở Tà nung, Đà Lạt năm 2002, em về lần thứ hai là khi ông ngoại mất mới khoảng 2 tháng.

Interviewer: Cảm nghiệm của em khi về Việt nam như thế nào? Có thấy khác Úc không?

Interviewee: Khác nhiều lắm sơ, điều đó là chắc chắn rồi, thứ nhất là đường phố xe cộ khác hẳn bên đây, thứ hai là cách sống của con người và xã hội. Nói về đường phố xe cộ, thì kỷ niệm đầu tiên mà em nhớ mãi là tối hôm đó bước xuống phi trường vì xa quê hương lâu quá rồi, cậu em ra đón trên chiếc xe chất ngồi như cá mè, chạy gần 3 tiếng mới về tới quê ngoại của em, hàng ghế dài chưa tới 1 mét rưỡi mà nó nhét khoảng 5, 6 người ngồi, ngồi sát người ta đến độ mình không biết mồ hôi mình hay người ta nữa, và bóp kèn inh ỏi chịu không nổi, và thứ hai là tệ nạn xã hội, cách cư xử, buôn bán của họ khác hẳn bên đây, khi mình ra đường mình thấy họ nói không lịch sự tể nhị, và họ buôn bán không sòng phẳng, rồi ra ngoài phố mình thấy các em bé bán vé số thì thấy tội nghiệp, nhưng thấy nó lạnh quá mình cũng sợ, hình ảnh các em mang đến cho em nhiều ấn tượng hơn vì lần đó về mục đích là để giúp các em mồ côi ở đó.

Interviewer: Em có gặp các em trong viện mồ côi không?

Interviewee: Khi em về Đà Lạt thì em vô trại Tà nung gặp các em, thì đa số các em người thiểu số là người Tà-ho chứ không có người kinh, thì các em có biết nói tiếng Việt sơ sơ, em về đó phải nói có nhiều ấn tượng lắm, trại Tà nung nằm hơi xa chợ Đà Lạt 1 chút, nó nằm ở dưới thung lũng, đường khúc khuỷu, từ trên nhìn xuống giống như 1 con ốc xoắn, dưới trại Tà nung có 1 nhà thờ rất đẹp, đứng giữa những căn nhà lụp xụp, em thấy rất cảm động khi thấy giữa 1 nơi hẻo lánh như vậy mà mình thấy hình ảnh Chúa ở đó, và ở đó có 1 linh mục người kinh.

Interviewer: Hiện giờ tại em còn tiếp tục trợ giúp cho dự án đó không?

Interviewee: Vì sơ biết phong trào sinh viên thì hết tầng lớp này đến tầng lớp khác nên tùy ban chấp hành.

Interviewer: Hồi đó em chịu trách nhiệm cho hội sinh viên phải không?

Interviewee: Dạ hồi đó em là hội trưởng hội sinh viên đại học Adelaide, và em kéo các bạn sinh viên để hoàn thành dự án đó.

- Interviewer: Theo kinh nghiệm của em thì thời gian em sống ở đây, tiểu học, trung học và đại học thì trong môi trường sinh hoạt và học đường, thì em được đối xử rất tử tế, ngoài môi trường đó ra em có cảm thấy bị coi thường bởi mình là người Việt nam, kì thị gì không?
- Interviewee: Thực ra em thấy ở Úc, em thì chưa thấy nhưng một số bạn bè của em thì có, họ kể cho em nghe, tuy nhiên những người có học thức, có sự hiểu biết thì họ đối xử công bằng, nhưng có những người có thể không hiểu đa văn hóa ở đây, chẳng hạn những tài xế xe bus, hoặc mình hỏi đường thì cách nói chuyện của họ có vẻ coi thường mình, vì mình là Á Đông.
- Interviewer: Có bao giờ em phải giấu mình là người Việt nam không, hay là em luôn hãnh diện vì mình là người Việt nam?
- Interviewee: Dạ em luôn hãnh diện mình là người Việt nam, tự hào về nguồn gốc của mình, đôi khi họ nhầm lẫn em là Tàu hoặc Nhật, nhưng em nói Tôi là người Việt nam. Khi em học tiếng Tàu hay tiếng Nhật, họ rất mến em là bởi vì em biết hát tiếng Tàu và tiếng Nhật và tiếng Việt, người Việt nam chúng tôi rất là thích học hỏi, thành ra mình không có cảm thấy xấu hổ khi nói mình là người Việt, nhưng em biết có một số bạn trẻ thì có.
- Interviewer: Có một số bạn trẻ cỡ tuổi của em, đặc biệt là sinh ra ở đây luôn cảm thấy có sự xung khắc trong suy nghĩ cũng như trong nếp sống, trong gia đình giữa con cái với bố mẹ. Vậy trong kinh nghiệm sống của em thì em có cảm thấy bố mẹ nghiêm khắc quá không hiểu và không cho mình tự do sống theo xã hội Úc không?
- Interviewee: Ba mẹ của em không đến nỗi cổ hủ, em không thấy sự xung khắc lắm, thỉnh thoảng cũng có, nhất là khi em tiếp xúc với bạn bè Việt nam, em biết được là các em sinh trưởng ở đây có nhiều xung khắc với bố mẹ, thứ nhất là bố mẹ của mình sinh trưởng ở Việt nam thành thử văn hóa, tư tưởng cũng khác ở bên đây và

chính khi họ sang đây vì tuổi tác, họ không dễ dàng thích ứng hòa đồng được, nhưng cái xung khắc nhất là vấn đề gia đình và học đường dạy khác nhau, chẳng hạn như ở học đường họ dạy là con cái phải thương yêu bố mẹ, nhưng có thể tiếp xúc như bạn bè, như khi bố mẹ đúng hay sai mình vẫn có thể nói được, nhưng trong gia đình Việt nam của mình thì không được phép nói, mình phải im và nghe.

Interviewer: Trong kinh nghiệm của em thì có trường hợp đó xảy ra không?

Interviewee: Dạ có, khi em thấy ông bà, bố mẹ hay cô chú nói không có lý, nếu như vấn đề nhỏ thì thôi, nhưng nếu sợ cái nhìn của bố mẹ sai mà đi đến những hậu quả không tốt thì em sẽ nói, thì chắc chắn sẽ nhận lãnh những lời mắng, còn một xung khắc nặng nề nữa là các trẻ em ở bên đây, thời gian học lớp 12, mình yêu sự tự do như mình muốn học hay chọn ngành nghề thích hợp với mình, bố mẹ thì bắt phải học cái này, thì em nghĩ bố mẹ Việt nam nên hiểu tâm lý của giới trẻ bên đây hơn.

Interviewer: Trong trường hợp của em thì tự em chọn ngành luật hay bố mẹ hướng dẫn hay là bố mẹ yêu cầu, hai chị em đều học luật phải không?

Interviewee: Vừa bố mẹ yêu cầu mà hai chị em cũng thích nữa, nói vậy cũng không phải sợ, thực ra bố mẹ không khuyến khích cũng không phản đối, bố mẹ thích hai chị em theo được hơn, nhàn rồi hơn, còn ngành luật thì hơi phức tạp, thì theo luật là chính hai chị em tự chọn.

Interviewer: Bây giờ em có hối hận khi chọn ngành đó không?

Interviewee: Chưa hành nghề thành thử chưa biết được sơ, để khi hành nghề mình giúp được bao nhiêu người và biết được lương bao nhiêu.

Interviewer: Trong khi em học em có thích không?

Interviewee: Em thấy rất là hứng thú bởi vì học luật không như ngành y hay nha sĩ chỉ biết có răng, hay sức khỏe, còn ngành luật bao gồm nhiều khía cạnh trong đời sống xã hội như gia đình, giao thông

hay những luật về y tế, thì em thấy học hỏi được rất nhiều, tuy nhiên em thấy là năm cuối rồi nhưng con đường đi thì không được như ý muốn của mình, trước đây em nghĩ là luật pháp là nơi mình thấy công bằng nhưng vào ngành rồi mình mới thấy không phải là công bằng nhưng theo đúng thủ tục là mình có thể đạt được mục đích, có thể len lỏi qua những kẽ hở của luật pháp, thành thử mình không cứng thì giúp người cũng khó, mình còn rơi vào hố sâu nữa.

Interviewer: Sơ cũng có nghe một trong những sinh viên Việt nam cách đây mấy năm rồi sau khi học luật gần ra trường rồi cũng nói với sơ vậy, em chọn ngành luật để có cơ hội giúp người ta, giúp những người nghèo bệnh đỡ cho người ta, nhưng mình thấy rất là khó bởi vì mình phải compromise nhiều giao lưu.

Interviewee: Vì xã hội này những người nghèo không dễ access to legal help về vấn đề tài chánh.

Interviewer: Nhưng không sao, sơ biết có một cha dòng Tên là luật sư và bây giờ đang bệnh đỡ cho người tị nạn nhiều, bố của cha ngày xưa làm tòa thẩm phán, nhờ đó mà bây giờ cha có tiếng nói để bệnh đỡ cho người tị nạn.

Interviewee: Em thấy thì bất cứ ngành nghề nào cũng có mặt trái của nó, ăn thua là mình phải xác định cho mình.

Interviewer: Trong các phong tục tập quán của người Việt nam, thì có điều gì em thấy, sống ở Úc không còn thích hợp nữa không? Đối với em thì cái gì nên bỏ, nên cải tiến để cho hợp thời hơn?

Interviewee: Em thấy nhiều thói quen của người Việt nên bỏ như khi tham gia văn nghệ hay đi lễ nhà thờ, em không thích sự ồn ào, mình không tôn trọng người khác, thứ hai nữa là không đúng giờ hẹn, và khi có vấn đề gì thì không nói thẳng với nhau mà cứ đi nói đằng sau.

Interviewer: Trong khung cảnh gia đình Việt nam, em thấy có điểm gì cần phải sửa đổi, thí dụ như làm sao để tránh những xung đột xảy ra,

để cho đời sống gia đình có hòa khí và tốt đẹp hơn, có sự hài hòa giữa cha mẹ ông bà và con cái trong gia đình hơn?

Interviewee: Em thấy vấn đề sinh hoạt gia đình rất là quan trọng nó ảnh hưởng rất nhiều, vì nó có thể giúp mọi người thương yêu nhau, hiểu biết nhau hơn, thí dụ như gia đình em khi ăn cơm tối là cha mẹ anh chị em quây quần bên nhau và có cơ hội trao đổi và kể cho nhau nghe 1 ngày làm học hay làm việc của mình, thì em thấy bữa cơm tối chia xẻ như vậy rất là quan trọng giúp cho tình thân và thông cảm dễ dàng hơn.

Interviewer: Gia đình của em ở bên này đông lắm phải không, đại gia đình.

Interviewee: Dạ đông, ông bà cô chú bên đây nhiều lắm, nhưng ai cũng bận rộn, chỉ gặp nhau vào dịp lễ, tết trung thu, giáng sinh.

Interviewer: Còn đời sống gia đình căn bản thì chỉ có bố mẹ và con cái thôi phải không?

Interviewee: Nói đến đại gia đình cô chú bác ông bà sống chung với nhau thì có lẽ có nhiều xung khắc vì có nhiều góp ý và ý kiến thì em không thích.

Interviewer: Như vậy là em muốn có sự tôn trọng đời sống cá nhân của em, cũng như mỗi người trong gia đình.

Interviewee: Như gia đình mẫu mực của Tây phương, ông nội hay ông ngoại rất là tôn trọng đứa cháu, nói chuyện với nó hoặc nó làm sai thì khuyên nhủ nó và tâm tình như 1 người bạn, còn đại gia đình Việt nam thì nó là cháu mình mà nó góp ý kiến là mình thấy không được thì mình là phận dưới là mình phải chịu thôi.

Interviewer: Ngoài ra em có ý kiến đóng góp nào nữa không?

Interviewee: Dạ tự nhiên em nghĩ ra là còn một điều bất lợi nữa, đặc biệt là người phụ nữ khi mình đi làm thì mình không có nhiều cơ hội như phái nam, được vài năm mình đi lấy chồng sanh con để cái, mặc dù được tiền maternity leave nhưng thực tế thì không hoàn toàn được như vậy, em cũng có một hay hai người cô khi có thai, thì khi trở lại chỗ đó không còn nữa họ chỉ bồi thường cho

mình một phần nào thôi, thực tế thì họ vẫn tìm cách đuổi mình. Cũng có những trường hợp đi xin việc làm thì trong đơn nó cũng hỏi mình single hay đã có chồng rồi, nếu mình có chồng được một hay hai năm thì họ cũng không thích lắm vì sau này có con thì gián đoạn công việc của nó.

Interviewer: Còn em thì cái gì là ưu tiên? gia đình hay nghề nghiệp?

Interviewee: Gia đình sợ, giờ muốn lấy chồng lắm rồi, vì thường con gái học xong lớp 11 hay 12, vì họ không có khả năng học tiếp nhưng vẫn đi làm lo cho cuộc sống và hạnh phúc riêng tư của mình thì em thấy trông họ rất đẹp, còn như tụi em khi học xong đại học nhìn giống 30, sồn sồn nhìn không được trẻ trung.

Interviewer: Em nghĩ là người con gái học cao quá có khó lấy chồng à? em có nghĩ về chuyện đó không? và có sợ không?

Interviewee: Dạ em có nghe người ta nói, nhưng không sợ, nỗi nào vung nấy.

Interviewer: Cám ơn em nhiều và chúc em gặp nhiều may mắn...



## Oral Memoir from Vietnamese - Australian Respondents

### Oral Memoir No 34

Interviewer: When did you arrive in Australia?

Interviewee: I arrived in Australia in 1982.

Interviewer: How long have you been in Australia?

Interviewee: I have been in Australia for twenty-two years.

Interviewer: When you came to Australia, did you come alone or with other relatives in your family?

Interviewee: I came to Australia with my younger brother.

Interviewer: What about your other siblings? Did they come later?

Interviewee: I sponsored my two brothers, sister and mother to come to Australia a few years later.

Interviewer: Do you remember your thoughts and feelings when you first arrived in Australia?

Interviewee: I came to Australia through the special humanitarian migration program, with no relatives and no friends. Therefore, I felt very lonely and very distant and unfamiliar with people from different backgrounds. I was lucky and felt privileged to see any person who had lived in the same village with me in Vietnam.

Interviewer: Did you stay at the Pennington hostel when you first came?

Interviewee: Yes, I lived in the Pennington hostel for a month and after that I rented a house.

Interviewer: Did you continue studying English in Australia?

Interviewee: Yes, I studied a few English classes at the Pennington hostel. After completing the classes offered at Pennington, I studied further at the Adult Migrant English Service (AMES) in Rundle Mall. I completed the English course at the AMES, when I had my first child.

Interviewer: What was your occupation in Vietnam?

Interviewee: I taught grade three at a primary school for a few years, upon my completion of high school.

Interviewer: Did you ever think of continuing to teach in Australia?

Interviewee: As soon as I arrived in Australia, I was offered a teaching position with the Ethnic school. When I had my first child I took about six to seven years off and returned to teach until this day.

Interviewer: What year level do you teach now?

Interviewee: I teach grade four, for the Vietnamese Community Ethnic school.

Interviewer: What are your feelings about being a Vietnamese Ethnic school teacher?

Interviewee: The first few years when I taught Vietnamese in Australia it felt strange and uncomfortable, because of the way the children were brought up. The methods of teaching I used to in Vietnam could not be used in Australia. After a few years of experience, I was able to talk to the students and understand their way of thinking. I learnt that in order for me to teach successfully, I need to get the students to love the class and to like the teacher. Once they like attending class, you can teach them anything you want and they will listen.

Interviewer: I see, you really like teaching as an occupation.

Interviewee: Yes, I do.

Interviewer: How many children do you have?

Interviewee: I have three children.

Interviewer: How old is your oldest child?

Interviewee: My oldest child is seventeen, she is getting ready to go to University this year.

Interviewer: How old are the other children?

Interviewee: My son is fifteen, currently in year eleven. My youngest son is twelve, in year seven.

Interviewer: Is your husband still working?

Interviewee: Yes, my husband is still working.

Interviewer: Is he still working as a building constructor?

Interviewee: Yes, he is.

Interviewer: Let's go to a new point, which is the issue of females adapting to the Australian culture. Do you remember the difficulties you encountered?

Interviewee: In my opinion, being female is very hard; especially those with children because we females have to work to help with finances and when we get home there are house duties to be done. Looking after the children is a very crucial role for females. In my case, I am the person who takes the children to extra-curricular activities such as table tennis and karate and so this takes up a lot of my time. I believe if I don't sacrifice my time, there will be a bigger chance of my children being peer pressured and getting influenced by naughty children.

Interviewer: Have you achieved what you anticipated with your sacrifice?

Interviewee: Compared with some people around me, I have achieved a lot because I know many families with children constantly running away from home, taking drugs, and children with bad permanent records. As with me, when my eldest son was in grade nine, he was in a bit of trouble with the school. This led to him being suspended for a term and for that reason I moved him to a different school to get him away from his bad friends. Not only this, but each morning I would take him to school and pick him up. Since then, he has settled down a lot and has also received excellence awards for some subjects that he studied.

Interviewer: Your eldest child, T, was born here in Australia and has just finished year 12. I recall her studying Vietnamese as a year 12 subject and she was quite good at it too. It is very hard for children growing up in Australia to learn their mother-tongue language, so can you tell me how you helped her through this?

Interviewee: I enrolled my children into the Vietnamese school at an early age. Since I teach Vietnamese myself, I would take them along with me. At home, I often remind them to revise their work so that when they get to class they can keep up with the other students. Also, at home I make the children speak Vietnamese to elders and to each other. Although, this is the rule, when I turn my back they find it more comfortable to speak English to each other. I often talk about my home town in Viet Nam, the children like to hear these stories and it makes them want to go to Viet Nam to visit their relatives. Moreover, I often ask the children to write letters to relatives in Viet Nam and also on special occasions such as New Years to ring them and wish them Happy New Year in Vietnamese.

Interviewer: In your opinion, do you believe family life is important? What I mean by family is your whole extended family, that includes your brothers and sister that you sponsored over here. I want to know what are the special connections which exist in a Vietnamese family, and whether you believe it is important for us to keep this Vietnamese family lifestyle in Australia.

Interviewee: I think it is necessary, because I have a very close bond with my siblings and care for them a lot. I sponsored my siblings over here with my mother, but she only stayed with us for two years before passing away. After that I had to step out and look after my siblings and help them form

a family and during this time they stayed in the same house with me and the children. From this the children made a special bond with their uncles and aunty. There will be times where the children look up to their uncles and aunty and ask for advice and help. If there is a time where my husband and I have to go away, my siblings would be their guardian. I believe my relationship with my brothers and sisters have influenced my children in many ways and this is what they look up to.

Interviewer: Now, let's go on to the topic of values and traditions within the Vietnamese culture, what do you believe most important in the Vietnamese culture? From your experiences, have your children adopted this culture in their everyday lives?

Interviewee: The children were taught from when they were very young to be polite, respectful and not ignorant. When they see their elders, they always greet them and have maintained this tradition still until this day. On New Year Day, the children have to wake up early to wish us, parents and their uncles and aunties Happy New Year In Vietnamese with special lines that they have learnt. With the Vietnamese people from North Vietnam, we have a tradition where the younger siblings to give a gift to the eldest sibling in the family on New Years. Although, we are all in Australia now, this tradition is still maintained.

Interviewer: Do you often see your brothers and sisters?

Interviewee: We visit each other weekly and we also get together for anniversaries of the deceased to pray for them. We also cook and have a meal together on these occasions. Also, another celebration which is the children's birthday, this is usually celebrated big as a whole family.

Interviewer: Do you think your role as a woman here in Australia is different to your role as a female in Vietnam? An example of the role of females in the family.

Interviewee: I think it is very different. Females in Vietnam mainly just live at home, look after the family, cook for the family while the men in the family work for money. Females in Australia are very independent, they work in the day and when they get home they do the housework and cook. So, they share the responsibilities with their husbands in finding income as well as looking after the children.

Interviewer: In your opinion, do females have equal say in the household? Referring back to yourself, would you say that you have the power to make decisions in your family?

Interviewee: I believe females in Australia have more rights and more freedom than females in Vietnam. In a family, both the parents have equal power, so before making any decisions the female will have a chance to discuss the issue with their husband. I can use myself as an example. When there is a decision to make on the renovations for the house, my husband discusses his ideas with me and then asks for my opinion.

Interviewer: Now, let's talk about the children's studies. Do you allow your children to choose the schools they go to and/or the courses they want?

Interviewee: I actually went back to school myself to do year eleven and twelve, to see what it is like and the way they teach here in Australia. I helped my children by talking to them about the courses they like and researching them by asking around. In the end, the decision is up to them because it is their future. If I told the children what course to do or where to go to school then they won't have their freedom and this can be very harmful.

Interviewer: Do you encourage your children to be involved in other extra-curricular activities?

Interviewee: When the children were younger I did involve them in the church youth group. Now, the children are older and I believe that spending time with the family is more important until the children are stable and not influenced by friends. Since I am a teacher in the Vietnamese ethnic school, I try to involve my daughter and encourage her to teach as well. She often helps the community out at the Vietnamese New Year Festival, by selling tickets and being a judge for the trivia competition.

Interviewer: I have noticed that children, especially those around the age of fifteen and sixteen; don't like to be involved in the Vietnamese community activities such as the church youth group. What are your views on this?

Interviewee: A reason could be because the children's parents did not involve them since they were young. To involve them at an older age, they feel left out with the other children that have been there for a long time and all know each other. I remember last year, my three year old nephew was singing a Christmas carol in Vietnamese and my daughter asked me what he was singing. This made me think that it was my mistake to not involve the

children with the Vietnamese community because something that obvious and simple and they did not know. Furthermore, I did try to involve my daughter in scouts but because their meeting times kept changing, she no longer attends. My youngest son currently does karate and has been learning karate for three years now.

Interviewer: The Vietnamese way of teaching the children is usually very strict. An example is that girls cannot go out late at night. What are your views on this?

Interviewee: That is a very big issue which gives me headaches thinking about it. This is an issue I talk to my children about a lot and have set rules since they were younger. An example is I did not allow my children to sleep over friends' houses at a late age because I do not know what their families are like and do not want anything bad to happen to my children. When my children want to go out, such as to a birthday party, then they would have to tell me whose birthday it is and what time they want to be picked up and I will drive them. If my daughter wants to go out, she must tell me what time she will be home and if she is stuck in traffic or running late she must call home to tell us. So, we do have rules in the family and make the children abide by them. My middle son, the one I had problems with earlier, used to catch the bus to and from school. For that reason, I was unable to monitor what time he gets home from school and where he goes. After all that trouble he got into at Adelaide High, my husband and I decided to move him to a different school, near home so we could drive him to and from school. After this, we did not allow him to go out with his friends as much and only let him go once a term with my supervision, so he chooses rather to stay home. He often got very angry and passive, but I talked to my daughter and she would convince him that what I did was right.

Interviewer: If your children decided to get married and start a family with a person, who is not Vietnamese, what would you do?

Interviewee: I have not thought hard about this just yet, as my children are still young. I do not mind if they do not marry a Vietnamese person because it is not me who has to live with them. I do remind the children that whoever they choose, just make sure you love them and are compatible. Even within the Vietnamese culture the people from the North have different lifestyles to

people from the South and it all depends on the person. My main concern would be how they treat my children and if my children are happy.

Interviewer: Have you been back to Vietnam?

Interviewee: Yes, I went back in 1995.

Interviewer: Do you ever think that in the future you would like to return to Vietnam to live?

Interviewee: I think I will not go back to Vietnam to live. When I go back to visit I do remember my childhood and think about my family, but I have adapted to the Australian lifestyle and no longer like the way Vietnamese people live. I believe there is more freedom and I feel more comfortable here and in Vietnam I cannot mingle as well with Vietnamese people because their views and thoughts are different to mine. I don't know what my views will be when I am older but for the time being I think that I would call Australia home.

Interviewer: When you are out and about or at work, do you think that people from a non-Vietnamese background treat you differently?

Interviewee: So far I have not felt as if I have not been treated differently and have not yet come across racist people.

Interviewer: Do you mainly associate with Vietnamese people? By this I mean, your friends and colleagues at your workplace?

Interviewee: Yes, the majority are Vietnamese.

Interviewer: Do you think that Vietnamese people have contributed a lot to the Australian culture today?

Interviewee: I think we have in many ways, especially the Vietnamese children. I like to encourage my children to contribute to the Australian culture, because this is their home country and they have grown up here. Since Australia is a very multicultural society, we want to keep this motto and make it stronger.

Interviewer: Do you have any dreams and wishes for your family or your community in the near future?

Interviewee: In the future, I would like to see our Vietnamese community grow bigger and stronger. Although my children live in Australia, I would still like them to maintain the Vietnamese culture and tradition as well.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for all your help.

## **Written Memoir from Vietnamese - Australian Respondents**

### **Written Memoir No 5**

My Life as a Vietnamese-Australian  
Year 12 Student, Female

Born into a Vietnamese family who immigrated to Australian soil during the early eighties, I was a part of the first Vietnamese generation (in my family) to be raised here.

I remember the first day at kindergarten; I did not understand English, not even my own English name, Anna. Like my parents and Vietnamese family who had a lack of English, I only knew of the very simple words like 'hello' and 'bye-bye'. It was at kindergarten that I met other children; many though were white Australians (Anglo-Saxons) who spoke English so well, that I often envied them. I on the hand was lost between their sentences. At first, making friends and trying to fit in was extremely difficult, considering I did not understand English that well. This was probably what caused me to grow up as a more quiet, hidden, and reserved person.

During my primary school years, I improved my English and made some very close friends, although most were Vietnamese, if not at least all were Asians, who I found much easier to communicate and interact with them. Not only was it on language wise but also on family and feature wise. Like many of my friends, I had yellow skin, black hair and was smaller in size than many of the white Australians. Fortunately, I did not suffer racism because other Australians also considered me as an Australian as well, only that I came from a different cultural background.

My biggest concern during my childhood was my English skills. At school, my English was not good as others, particularly of those white Australians. At home, I struggled with my English homework since no one in my family was fluent in English and could help me. However, one of the main reasons why I could not expand my English skills besides at school, had been because that my parents force me to speak Vietnamese at home, as they said talking English was forbidden, particularly at my grandparents house because they could hardly understand any English. I did not understand why they would do that but my parents said they did this for my own good, so that I would not lose my heritage and my language.



At home, my life was greatly different compared to other white Australian children. I was also born as the eldest of five children in a Vietnamese family and to me; this has always been one of the heaviest responsibilities in my life. As my parents would always remind me, “You’re the eldest so you must act correctly to be a good role model for your siblings”. Sometimes I just want to escape this responsibility and be free. Apart from this, I must carry that burden and the intense pressure from my Vietnamese family who constantly pushes me to study well and to maintain my cultural traditions so my future could be bright.

Every Saturday morning, ever since I was five, my parents have taken me to Vietnamese school. While some of my Australian friends were sleeping in, I was at school learning Vietnamese. My parents believe that it was definitely important which was why they would hardly let me be absent or late for my Vietnamese classes. They would always remind me that it was for my own benefit and future, which I would always question how Vietnamese could help me.

After Saturday, it was Sunday, which my family would go to church. My family have always been religious but it was to help my generation and me, as our grandparents would say. We went to the Vietnamese masses where the whole community was literally Vietnamese. It was here that part of social life and family revolved around. Growing up in the Vietnamese community, I participated in both religious and traditional aspects of the community. Unlike some of my other Australian friends, I celebrated various occasions of my culture, like the Vietnamese New Year and Full Moon Festival. My life was different from my Australian friends but it was unique.

I used to be unsure of why my parents forced me to learn Vietnamese but over ten years of constantly studying Vietnamese, I have grown to realise the reasons why my parents compelled me to it. I now see that learning Vietnamese is not only an advantage to me academically, but also as other benefits in my life. For example, in helping others like Vietnamese people who cannot speak English and having better opportunities in career paths. However, most of all, the real reason behind studying Vietnamese would be to secure as well as to value my language and culture, which I know with certainty, my parents and family would want, since sadly these days, more and more Vietnamese young people are failing to comprehend this.

When communicating in another language like Vietnamese, I am not limited to my own family and Vietnamese home. I can also relate to the language in social events like cultural festivals, the Vietnamese church and communities, at the Vietnamese school and sometimes even at my English school. It is at these places that I am able to broaden my knowledge of Vietnamese language as well as to preserve it.

To me speaking another language like Vietnamese is special and significant, which is why I'm not ashamed of it but rather am very grateful to be born into a family where cultural traditions are kept. In my life, the Vietnamese language plays a major and essential role, even more than the English language. This is because I am always surrounded by my Vietnamese people- at home, at school, at church etc.

If I were to be a person who could not speak the Vietnamese language, it would be a disgrace for me to call myself as a complete Vietnamese. This is because I would just be like all other Australians who speak English; the slightest difference may just be my Vietnamese lifestyle and family, if not only my Asian/Vietnamese appearance. Without the language I would be like an outcast of the Vietnamese society as I would not be able to understand yet communicate with others around me, especially my family who would not understand English- if that were the only language I were to talk to them.

Now my life is not much different as before. I still participate in the Vietnamese community and still have close friends that are Vietnamese but my parents are much stricter, especially about my education and traditions. My life is nearly the same as most other Australian teenagers but I am just luckier to be a Vietnamese in a family with great traditions. Australia has given my family and I so many wonderful opportunities, which is why I am very thankful for it and would love to say that I am only a true and absolute Australian. However, my true heritage, running in my blood is of a Vietnamese but together I am quite proud to say that I am a Vietnamese-Australian.

**Written Memoir No 8**  
**My Life as a Vietnamese -Australian**  
**Year 11 Student, Male**

Today, 28th of May 2005 I have decided to write about my unique experiences as a Vietnamese person living in Australia. I have found that life in Australia is not difficult and is quite pleasant. Australia is a great country and its society is unique and very diverse. I have noticed that during my time at school everyone is treated equally and the differences in cultures are not so obvious because Australia is a multicultural country. My experience at school is that everyone welcomes and respects you not because you are Vietnamese or of a different culture than them but because you live in Australia. I have also learnt that the Vietnamese family in Australia is similar and at the same time quite different in some areas when compared to the Vietnamese family in Vietnam. Similarities are the roles of each person in the family and the amount of respect that is forever compulsory from the children towards their parents. Differences between a Vietnamese family in Australia and one in Vietnam are the amount of influence by science and technology. As a Vietnamese person I have noticed that the Vietnamese family in Australia is being affected by technology and other daily requirements that they would not have needed if they lived in Vietnam. The Vietnamese in Australia are still strong in maintaining customs and traditions by organizing traditional Vietnamese festivals and ceremonies every year. The Australian people have respected our customs and traditions by giving us the opportunity to celebrate and to display our festivals and ceremonies in public. The Vietnamese community in Australia is very supportive and will help you with any difficulties that you may have. Also, I have noticed that in Australia there is no persecution and it is unlike Vietnam where people are not free to say what they like.

There are many different religions in Australia that are being recognized and respected. I have experienced the kindness of the Australian people and of the Government in helping me and other people to have a safe and fair life in Australia. I am very pleased to see that Australia treats everyone equally.

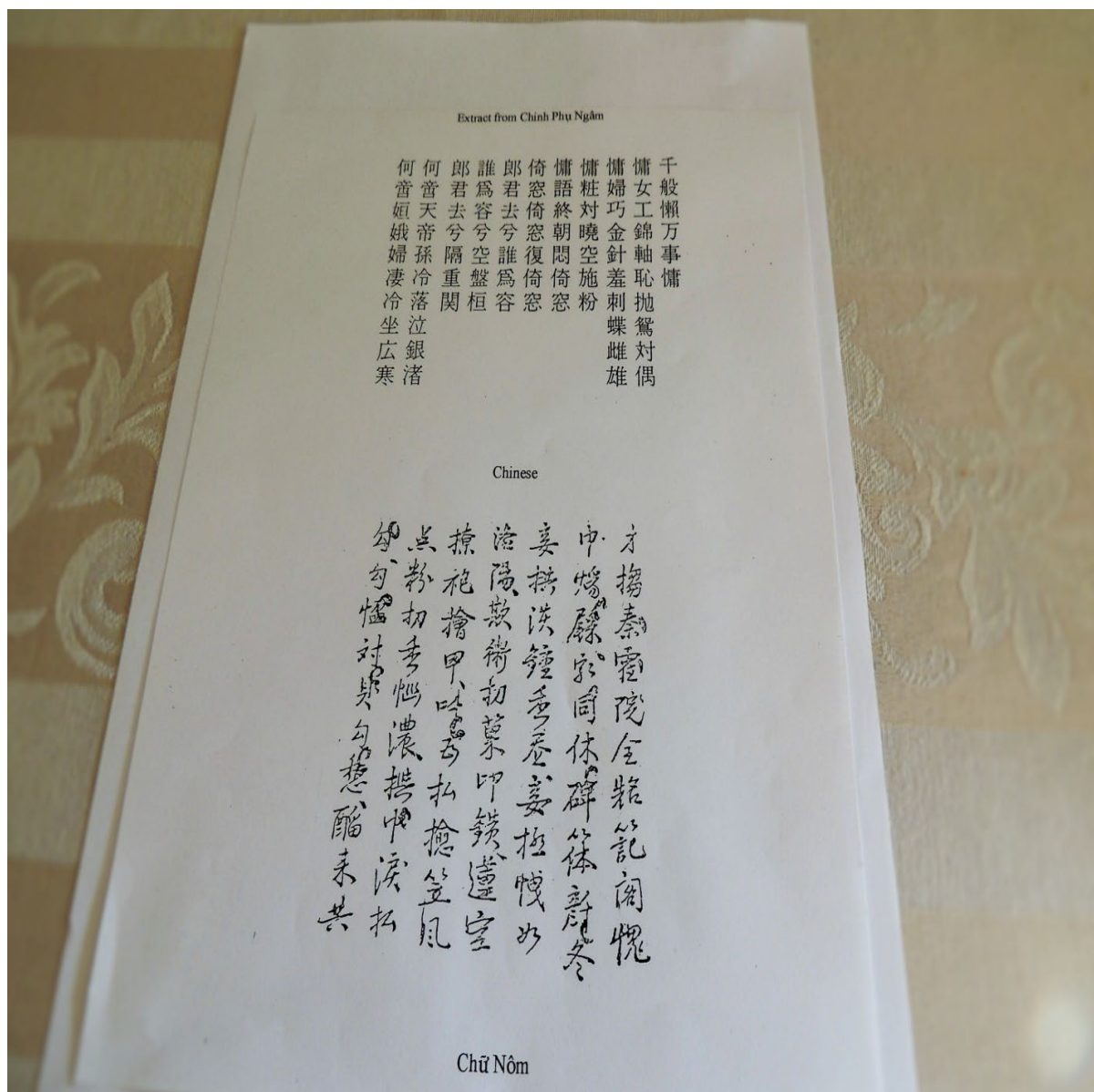
Another experience that I have as a Vietnamese person living in Australia is that the Australian Government supports us and encourages us to maintain our traditions and customs. When I fill out information or apply for any government help there is always forms that are in Vietnamese to help me. This is very good because many people in

Australia are still confused about the English language. Also, there is a law against racism making Australia a safer and more pleasant place to live.

Everywhere I go I can see people from other cultures and this is quite fascinating. The Vietnamese people in Australia are contributing their talents into the wider community through businesses, education and culture. There are many Asian groceries owned by the Vietnamese in all states and cities of Australia that promote Vietnamese food and vegetables including a variety of wonderful Vietnamese herbs and spices. This shows that the Vietnamese people are adapting and contributing to the Australian society smoothly and that they are being treated equally to everyone else in Australia.

Australia is a wonderful country and all the different cultures in Australia are respected and acknowledged. Being a Vietnamese living in Australia I can conclude that the experiences I had in Australia are generally on the good side and that Australia is truly a multicultural country.

## Appendix 12: Example of Text Written in "Chữ Nôm"



Source: Dương Quảng Hàm, 1968  
(No copy right is required)

## Appendix 13: First Manuscript in "Chữ Quốc Ngữ"



Photo of Alexandre de Rhodes  
(Dương Quảng Hàm, 1968)



Opening page of Alexandre de Rhodes'  
Latin-Annamese religious text

Source: Dương Quảng Hàm, 1968  
(No copy right required)



## Appendix 14: Pictures of Activities - Vietnamese Catholic Community in Paris



Source: Vietnamese Catholic Community in Paris Magazine  
(Permission to use in this research granted)



## Choirs & Dancing Group



Đêm Văn nghệ 'Tiếng Ru  
Muôn Đời' (22-4-1978)



Văn nghệ Giữ Thơm Quê Mẹ (29-6-1985)



Kỷ Niệm 50 Năm Thành Lập Giáo-Xứ Việt-Nam tại Paris

Source: Vietnamese Catholic Community in Paris Magazine  
(Permission to use in this research granted)



## Religious Activities



Kiểu ảnh Các Thánh Tử  
Đạo Việt Nam, tại  
Besançon (1989)

Lễ Các thánh Tử Đạo  
Việt Nam (17-11-1996)



Kỷ Niệm 50 Năm Thành Lập Giáo-Xứ Việt-Nam tại Paris

Source: Vietnamese Catholic Community in Paris Magazine  
(Permission to use in this research granted)



## Appendix 15: Pictures of Activities - Vietnamese Catholic Community in SA

### Religious Activities -



*Easter Friday Service*



*Holy Thursday Mass*

*(Permission to use in this research granted)*

## Religious Activities - Vietnamese Catholic Community SA



*Vietnamese New Year Mass*



*Marian procession with the people of Archdiocese of Adelaide*





## Cultural Activities - Vietnamese Catholic Community in South Australia



*Singing at a Community Function - Picture by fr Tong Tran (permission granted)*



## Social Activities - Vietnamese Catholic Community in South Australia



*Healthy living activity after Sunday Mass*



**Thủ hiến Nam Úc và nhóm RA KHỎI**



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